

published monthly since 1866

# The Fortnightly

FOUNDED IN 1865 BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE

MARCH, 1948

CMLXXV N.S.

Illinois U Library

## CONTENTS

RUSSIA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION

MAX BELOFF

UNIFICATION OF THE BALKANS

GEORGE PENDLE

ITALY'S NEW CONSTITUTION

G. E. TREVES

THE WOMEN OF GERMANY

PAMELA HINKSON

WHY DRAG RELIGION INTO EDUCATION ?

J. S. WHALE

CHILDREN BILL

JOHN MOSS

COVENTRY PATMORE AND ROBERT BRIDGES

DEREK PATMORE

THREE WOMEN—A Poem

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

LIOT HOWARD

JOHN BUXTON

The Fortnightly Library :

WHAT IS ASPHODEL ?

ROBERT GRAVES

Other Contributors : Sir Henry Slessor, Ewan Wallis-Jones, J. T. Murphy, William Rydal, William C. Atkinson, Grace Banyard.

PRICE 3s. 6d. OR 75 CENTS

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

42s OR \$8.50 PER ANNUM

ALL CLASSES  
OF INSURANCE •  
TRANSACTIONED

**MOTOR UNION**  
INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED  
10, ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.



---

# Recorded for Posterity

Those who have something to add to the knowledge and welfare of mankind speak to the world through the microphones of the BBC. Week by week their contributions are recorded in 'The Listener' for your immediate reflection and for the contemplation of future generations.

# The Listener

A BBC PUBLICATION

EVERY THURSDAY 3d.





# THE FORTNIGHTLY

---

MARCH, 1948

---

## RUSSIA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION

BY MAX BELOFF

ON November 7, 1947, the Soviet Union celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. By the ordinary reckoning of time this means that the Soviet régime has lasted an entire generation. Apart from Marshal Stalin himself none of those who made the Revolution have survived to lead it in its new phase—and despite the adulation of court historiographers, he can hardly be placed in the forefront of our picture of the year 1917. The generation whom our western diplomats have to deal with are already the products of the system itself. To the outer world at any rate, the Soviet Union presents the picture of a thoroughly disciplined and unified State, one of the two greatest powers—the only two great powers—of the contemporary world.

For the historian, the achievement, the mere fact of survival, is significant in itself. Thirty years after the French Revolution brings us to the year 1819; the constitutional monarchy, the First Republic, the Directory, Consulate and Empire had come and gone. The brother of Louis XVI sat on the throne of France, supported by the aristocracy and church; if much had changed for good, there was much that had remained to link France with its past. Thirty years after the calling of the Long Parliament, the year 1670 saw the height of the Stuart reaction with the Cabal ministry and the Treaty of Dover. In the Soviet Union, thirty years after revolution, no single institution except the Orthodox Church remains to remind one of the Russia of the Czars; and the contemptuous and limited toleration afforded to the Church enhances rather than subdues the contrast. How difficult it is not to forget that less than forty years ago, left-wing members of the British Parliament protested against the Entente with Russia, as an immoral pact with the darkest of continental despotisms!

During the three decades of its history, the Soviet Union's reputation abroad has undergone many vicissitudes. Some people have regarded it and its works as anathema from the beginning. Others have been its ardent supporters, ready at any moment to explain and justify the latest twist in the "party line". But for most people, particularly in this country with its empirical and non-ideological approach to world affairs, the interpretations of the Soviet scene have varied according to its impact on our own affairs. On the left, the identification of the Soviet Union with social progress has caused successive waves of enthusiasm, which have in turn subsided, leaving many of the erstwhile admirers of the régime as disillusioned recruits to the ranks of its bitterest enemies

On the right, there has been, now and then, a burst of confidence in Soviet realism in the economic and diplomatic field, and a readiness to co-operate in the pursuit of immediate political objectives.

When we examine the present phase of Anglo-Soviet relations, we can sense in the speeches of our statesmen the same feelings of frustrated bewilderment, as contact with Soviet Russia has engendered among men of lesser rank. When Mr. Attlee or Mr. Bevin are moved to rebuke the strident and persistent insults of the Soviet press, or are forced to register yet another deadlock over some vital matter of peace-making one has the impression that they are not only angry but bewildered. The same is true of the United States. Miss Frances Perkins's fascinating sketch, *The Roosevelt I Knew*,\* is remarkable for the light which it throws on the extraordinary naiveté with which the late President approached the problem of dealing with the Soviet Government. It was difficult for someone of his broad and humane outlook to grasp the fact that in these times there were statesmen for whom the simple appeal to human welfare, for whom a respect for man based upon an essentially religious view of man's destiny, could make no appeal. Mr. Byrnes has now shown to what an extent President Roosevelt's last months were darkened by his growing disillusion with the Russians; and his own account of his dealings with them is in itself a valuable first-hand testimony to the real nature of the clash between the two worlds.

It is obvious enough that foreign policy must always be the most difficult aspect of any country's affairs for the outside observer to interpret. In the case of a totalitarian régime, the normal difficulties are exaggerated by the fact that the forming of policy is carried out in private and that there is no evidence in the form of public debate or controversy.

And when one comes to the handling of Soviet policy one can make all allowances for prejudice, wishful thinking, insularity, and so on, and still find disagreement on fundamental issues among persons whose good faith and intelligence are alike undoubted. Is Russia to-day aggressive or pacific? Is she nationalist or revolutionary? Is it the ghost of Catherine the Great or of the Comintern which faces us? Does she bid from weakness or from strength? Does the aggressive demeanour of the Soviet leaders indicate the conviction that major victories lie close ahead or is it bluff to still criticism at home and to bewilder potential enemies abroad?

The more insistently these questions are asked—and in a sense, there can hardly be any discussion of the international scene which does not involve them—the more disquieting, the more ominous does the whole thing become. The effect of predicating one's own actions upon hypothetical answers to questions one has formulated for oneself about some external force, is hardly conducive to clarity in thinking, or to resolution in action. When one finds R.A.F. education personnel, as I

\* Hammond, Hammond. 1947.



did recently, arguing in favour of an immediate preventive war with Russia, on the ground first, that the result of our policy towards Hitler had shown the folly of appeasement, and secondly, that to allow Russian domination of other countries was to make meaningless our sacrifices in the German wars, then the argument in favour of an attempt to cry halt would seem an unanswerable one.

I do not claim that a historian of Soviet foreign policy can answer these questions; what needs showing, I believe, is that they ought not be asked, because they reflect an unsound approach to the whole problem.

It is essential to remember that Soviet propaganda which has had the aid of far more genuine servitors outside Russia than ever Hitler could claim outside Germany, has had triumphs no less far-reaching if sometimes less obvious. The first and most important point to make about the history of Soviet foreign policy, is that so far from being able to interpret its motives, hardly anyone seems to know what it has been. The history of the Russian Revolution as it is generally discussed is not the record of real events at all but a myth. This is partly the deliberate work of pro-Soviet writers but partly also—and there is irony here—partly the result of certain themes in anti-Soviet writings both on the right and on the left. The curious thing is that it has been possible for myths to be created about the very earliest phases of the story—about the first years of the régime when Lenin was still alive, when a certain measure of democracy still existed within the ruling group and for which, consequently, a good deal of first-hand evidence does in fact exist. It is possible for Lenin's latest biographer, Mr. Christopher Hill, an English historian of high academic standing, to deny that Lenin's actions in the winter of 1917-1919 were based on the belief that the Revolution must either spread or be extinguished. And large numbers of readers will find nothing curious about this.

Even those who admit that Lenin was a revolutionary in the full sense only postpone the mythical element to the days of the Stalin-Trotsky clash. How often do we read the story that Marshal Stalin, the wise and far-seeing patriot, wished to devote Russia's energies to internal upbuilding while the desperate and fanatical Leon Trotsky insisted on diverting these energies into plotting upheavals abroad? Or if they happen to be uneasily aware that the Communist International only gave final form to its world-programme in 1928, and that the bitterest attacks by communists on other Left parties came after that year, they simply go on a bit further and point to the mature, practical, western-minded diplomacy of Litvinov as showing that the Soviet Union had now outgrown its youthful extremism and was prepared to be a fully co-operative member of the community of nations.

Despite the accumulation of evidence to the contrary, the Soviet-German pact can still be laid at the door of Mr. Chamberlain and the other "appeasers", and Soviet assistance to Germany and the fifth-columnist

activities of communists in the western countries passed over with an appeal to the glory of their martyrs in the resistance movements. During the war, yet another occasion was found to show that this time the Soviet Union was really grown up ; bishops and epauletted generals flourished on the Soviet scene ; medieval saints and patriotic czars supplanted Marx and Engels in contemporary iconography ; Soviet policy was exclusively and permanently a policy of defending the fatherland. Now, the pendulum has swung violently the other way. But Marshal Stalin has only to whisper words about peace and peaceful co-existence to some innocent abroad and the chorus starts up again with undiminished vigour. The fact that on the other side, the régime has abandoned so much of what some socialists thought was implicit in socialism—economic and social egalitarianism for instance—leads to denunciations of Marshal Stalin for betraying the Revolution and this fortifies his appeal to those who would like to believe it.

There is thus what might be called a straight-line picture of Soviet development which shows the régime as developing out of a theory of international revolution—permanent revolution—into a State distinct from other States only in its greater concern for the welfare of the masses, through the policy of socialism in one country (which is somehow to be distinguished from national-socialism as known elsewhere). The fact that this nationalist transformation has allegedly taken place more than once already, without appreciably altering the canons of Soviet conduct on the international scene, does not appear unduly to worry anyone.

In creating this useful myth, the Russians and their communist agents have been assisted by the vanity and self-assurance of professional historians of European politics. Nothing ministers to the power-complex so much as the writing of diplomatic history ; the meekest of professors can trample at will through the chancelleries of Europe provided the date is reasonably remote. And anything that does not get into the archives is taken to be of no consequence in the affairs of nations. The laws governing the relations of nations can therefore be constructed as relationships simply of power, and can be taken to be as immutable as the laws of chess. Poland was partitioned by Hohenzollern monarch and Romanov Czar ; it was partitioned again by Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany ; it will always be partitioned whenever Germany and Russia are not simultaneously laid low as in 1918. The logic seems impeccable, but based upon insufficiently accurate premises, it may have its dangers.

Much that has happened in Russian policy in the last two years might have happened under any set of rules. In many directions—and the point should not be overlooked—nothing more has been done than to place Russia where she was in 1914 ; and much that she still claims would have been hers if the Bolshevik Revolution had not happened, and if Russia had taken part as a victor power in the Peace Conference of 1919. The apparent validity of this argument for Soviet claims is strengthened by the bottomless cynicism which enables the Soviet leaders to claim any portion



of the Czarist inheritance that suits them while repudiating the inheritance as a whole in the name of anti-imperialism. Thus whereas all the opposition elements in Russia, in fact, rejoiced at the repulse of Russia at the hands of Japan, as providing an opportunity for attacking the Czarist régime, Marshal Stalin could say that the recovery of Russia's position in Manchuria wiped out the rankling shame of the defeat. On November 7, 1947, guns sounded thirty salvoes in a number of selected Russian cities, and in Port Arthur !

The fact is that the relationship between a country which has undergone a revolution, and its pre-revolutionary past is a complex one, and that its formulation demands an understanding of the revolution itself. But this is too often lost upon the would-be Albert Sorels of to-day. Indeed there are times when one feels that the influence of the past is not so much of direct significance as of value as an explanation or excuse for what is otherwise inexplicable or inexcusable.

It seems indisputable that the adherents to the view that all or most of Soviet behaviour can be explained in terms of an inheritance, overlook the element of choice which an inheritance of this kind involves. It is confusing rather than helpful to use so biologically significant a term as inheritance at all, and pro-Soviet writers who do so should be reminded of the anathema lately launched against the science of genetics by the high priests of Marxian orthodoxy. Just as Soviet thinkers transfer into the biological field concepts which may perhaps be valid for the social sciences, so also there is the equal danger of misusing biological concepts when dealing with human societies. It is, of course, legitimate to point out the inescapable elements in the situation of Russia which the Bolshevik leaders faced. Some were inherent in geography, like the ill-defined frontier on the west ; others were more truly the result of past history, like the degree of illiteracy. But outside those limits, the elements of choice were not lacking. One should not forget that the whole argument can be used either way. Soviet achievements in industry and in conquering illiteracy, two of the proudest boasts of the régime, can if one likes, be shown as having been inherent in the progress of the pre-Revolutionary period, and likely to have been reached even in the absence of a revolution.

The same kind of thinking seems to underlie the attempt to explain in terms of the Russian past, the peculiar messianic qualities of Soviet foreign policy—the claim of Moscow to be the centre from which salvation shall come to the toiling masses of the world. The leading exponent of this view is Professor Arnold Toynbee who elaborated it in a lecture recently published by *Horizon*. In Professor Toynbee's view this messianic quality has been a permanent feature of Russian history, and can be traced back to the claim of the Muscovite princes from the fifteenth century, to be the inheritors of the fallen Byzantium, and so be the idea that Moscow is the " third Rome ". It would be absurd to deny the fact that much that is important in the cultural history of Russia can be traced to its Byzantine

inheritance and to its contacts with Byzantine both before and after the intervening period of the Tartar yoke. In the fact that it was this perhaps that prevented the development of the Church-State conflict from taking the same form as in western Europe, may be sought the explanation of the relatively slow development of liberal and individualistic political philosophies in Russia ; but to make the Byzantine influence the dominating one in the post-revolutionary period would seem to be a mythical or poetical rather than an historical statement. It minimizes too much the fact that the Russian social-democracy out of which Lenin and his followers came was a consciously westernizing force, that the repudiation of Russia's backwardness and a determination to outstrip the west precisely in the material sphere where its advance seemed greatest, has been one of the most constant elements in Soviet policy and doctrine. In the third volume of his *Study of History* (published in 1934) Professor Toynbee saw the Bolshevik Revolution as in its essence an anti-western movement, and only through its methods obliged to adopt a western masquerade. Therefore, he foresaw the future of Russia as a struggle between western and non-western (that is, Byzantine) elements. Fifteen years later when great parties in the western countries look to Moscow for doctrine and practical instruction, it seems harder to dismiss their common Marxian heritage. The messianic quality of Soviet foreign policy, and the communist tendency to treat all non-communist peoples as outside the pale of civilization altogether, is perhaps similar in some respects to the ancient distinction between Roman (or Greek) and barbarian. But to indicate a parallelism does not prove a connection, still less an identity. The medieval injunction *entia non sunt multiplicanda* might be given a modern twist and usefully translated as " don't make your interpretations more sophisticated than they need be." It seems more likely that a Soviet generation brought up to venerate Lenin, and to regard the main task of abstract thought to lie in commenting upon the texts of Leninist doctrine in an almost scholastic fashion, is unlikely to be seriously affected by the writings of medieval theologians or nineteenth century Slavophiles, or by a non-Marxist version of history.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Revolution seems a good occasion for granting it the recognition accorded to a historical fact and treating it accordingly. It should not be treated as an all-embracing explanation, for the world of men differs from the world of the physical sciences in not being susceptible to explanations which explain everything. But it should be admitted that it explains a good deal. To see what it explains we must certainly begin by seeing what it was, and what have been its results. Clearly we are not helped by the efforts of some apologists. But it is not the Soviet leaders themselves, or their spokesmen, who are misleading. Once one allows for their unusual vocabulary for the special sense in which they use words like " democratic " or " fascist ", one allows for the fact that they do not believe in objective truth in the ordinary



sense, and that their concepts of truth and falsehood are conditioned by the relations of particular questions to the class-struggle (of which their struggle with their enemies is part), and that this morality is accordingly a dual one, there is no reason whatever to regard the evidence of what the Russians say as not evidence at all. After all except for what the Russians *do*, it is the only evidence we have.

The real confusion is that which is brought into the subject by those writers (numerous in England) who while not themselves communists feel bound, as in the case of Professor G. D. H. Cole, to put the best face upon every aspect of the Soviet system. This they do because to put it at its simplest, they feel bound to carry over their allegiance to socialism into whatever subject they are discussing. Because the Soviet Union is socialist that is to say non-capitalist, because it claims to stand for the workers and because Communism is doctrine of the "left", they feel they would be letting down their own side if they admitted that neither the objective nor the methods of the Soviet régime have anything to do with the humanitarian, radical tradition which is the best side of the labour movement in this country.

We have made mistakes in dealing with the external manifestations of the Russian Revolution largely because we have failed to understand its purposes and its methods. We know in a vague way that it is Marxist without understanding the significance of Marxism in this sense. We feel in a curious self-abasing way that Marxism is an up-to-date and hence probably important and valuable philosophy which may not be altogether acceptable but from which we may, as the saying goes, "have something to learn". As is the case with Freud in another sphere, we don't go the whole way of course (there is something a little crude about it) but we go some of the way. That way, the way of mental laziness, lies perdition.

Some people have compared Marxism in its Leninist version at any rate, to a religion. This infuriates the Marxists and is of course not wholly correct. A religion without the supernatural is not religion as normally understood. And Marxism has its creeds and its saints but no divinity. On the other hand, the parallel does serve to bring into the centre of the picture two points which are worth remembering. The first is that Marxism, like some other "secular religions" makes sufficient appeal to the innate religious sentiments of human beings to enable them to act as though it were a religion, and to require no other religion, indeed to exclude any other religion.

In the second place, the Marxist creed is a whole, and therefore stands or falls as a whole. Either it is a reliable guide to the interpretation of the world or it is not. And since for thirty years, the destinies of a great people, and of a growing multi-national empire have been guided by it, this question would seem of importance. But the measure of our inadequacies is the rarity with which it is asked. And yet this material is there—thirty years of Soviet foreign policy, thirty years of comment on

the world scene in the Soviet press. Thirty years of sneers from Stalinists and Trotskyists alike at liberal politics, and at the idealist philosophies upon which such politics should be based. But our own intellectual horizon in these matters is dominated by men who deliberately and consciously straddle between the two worlds. *The New Statesman and Nation*, that journal which symbolizes as no other, the intellectual fog in which we have chosen to live, continues to reshape the Russian scene in its own image. The challenge of Soviet foreign policy is too serious for this kind of dilettantism. The ravages of Marxism are getting too close for comfort—our world is too near a new dark ages for parlour games.

For the record speaks for itself. The evidence that the Soviet leaders came into power believing that the revolution must spread or they themselves perish is overwhelming despite recent attempts to prove the contrary. Lenin had no certainty that the régime he set up would last longer than had the Paris Commune. He knew—what again is so often forgotten—that it was not the Bolsheviks who had overthrown the old régime but wider forces, that the assumption made outside Russia so freely to-day, that only a communist system would suit Russia, was nonsense; there was not even a communist “system” as such to apply. Marx had not provided blue-prints of a new society—only finger-posts to a new Utopia. Lenin knew that it was not the better cause, but the better nerves that won through in times of revolutionary upheaval. The Bolsheviks hung on. They have been hanging on ever since.

The basis of Soviet foreign policy was settled in the first four months of the régime between the overthrow of Kerensky and the signing of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. The history of those four months has been made the subject of a book by Mr. John Wheeler-Bennett *Brest-Litovsk—the Forgotten Peace* which ranks, both as history and as literature, very high among the historical writings of our time. But it does tend to emphasize two secondary features of the story at the expense of its most important lesson. Mr. Wheeler-Bennett wanted to discredit the unimaginative and unintelligent handling of the situation by the Allied Powers (which is not difficult) and he wanted to show the nemesis which overtook German ambitions, and what those ambitions were. What he failed to bring about in his writing, though he was clearly aware of it, is the fundamental impress which Soviet policy derived from Lenin's handling of the issues involved and from his victorious struggle with his colleagues to get them to accept a shameful peace.

Lenin did not depart from the idea that the Revolution must be international in the end; nor, in spite of Trotskyist charges, is there any reason to believe that his successors have done so. But he saw that there would have to be a change of the time-schedule and, more important still, that one could not know in advance what that schedule was going to be. Therefore the important thing was to cling to what one had got—an independent socialist régime on a definite portion of the earth's surface;



compared with the fact of its existence, the question of area or of location was secondary. Soviet policy was in a sense defensive. But it was also in the longer term necessarily offensive ; it had to be prepared to advance. This meant the ineluctable hostility of other powers. Could they combine, they would be stronger than the Soviet State. But, argued Lenin, they cannot combine. They have causes of conflict arising inevitably from imperialism—the last stage of capitalism—and will fall out. The Soviet government must use to the full the advantage which this knowledge gives them. Hence he was quite sincere when various emissaries of the Allies offered help if the Germans forced Russia back into the war. Lenin would rather make peace than fight, and would not fight except to save the very existence of the régime. But if he did he would accept help from whatever quarter. Let us if need be accept help from the Anglo-French brigands against the German brigands ! It would not matter, in the long run, if both sets of brigands were doomed. Litvinov and the League ; Stalin and UNO ; it was Lenin and the Anglo-French brigands all over again.

If one takes the argument only as far as this, one can of course dismiss it with the words that the Soviet Union is simply acting like any other country, that there is nothing here which Machiavelli or any other exponent of power-politics could not have understood and expounded. The point is how were the Russians to decide what the relations between the powers really were, where the major conflicts were going to occur ? If Germany attacked, there was no option but to throw in one's lot with the other powers that were fighting her. But if attacks were to be warded off and forestalled, it was necessary to make forecasts. And when it came to forecasting the action of other powers, the full rigours of Marxism came into play and the Russians at more than one juncture, for instance, took as their basic assumption that the coming world struggle was between Great Britain and the United States.

Similarly there is a clear continuity in the Soviet relationship to the revolutionary movement elsewhere. The first move of the new government was to call all the workers of other countries to force their governments to make peace ; and not the workers of the enemy countries only.

Thereafter they regarded the workers' movements as having a dual function. They were to make revolutions where they were strong enough, and where they were not they were to act as defenders of the Soviet interests of the moment. Clearly this function required that their policies should be centrally controlled, and once it became clear that world revolution was not a matter for tomorrow the Russians concentrated on forcing the workers' movements everywhere to accept their control and on branding as traitors to their class those socialists who would not. Therefore their hatred of the non-communist socialists has always been much more intense than their hatred of the capitalist enemy.

Here it might be said that any government will of course take care, if

its position is threatened, to keep on good terms if it can with some element in foreign countries. Once again the difference was made by the fidelity to the Marxist creed, with its rigid schematic theory of economic and political developments. The working-class movements could not just be held as a reserve to sabotage an anti-Soviet war, and this for two reasons: first, because the Soviet leaders genuinely retained their belief in future eras of communist expansion and, secondly, because they could not afford to see themselves outbid on the left. The communist leaders abroad had to steer a course which would both serve the interests of the Soviet Union and keep the masses in their own countries faithful to their leadership. The tightrope they walked was a slippery one, and it is not surprising that few survived for long.

The earliest years of the régime saw the general technique for action abroad worked out. As in Russia, communists had to combine with other opponents of the existing régimes because it was unlikely that they would anywhere be strong enough to overthrow a government on their own. But they had to use the alliance, to win over the followers of the other parties, and when the appropriate moment came they had to detach themselves from the coalition and push on to sole power. Since this was openly proclaimed, it is not surprising that their temporary allies looked at them with considerable suspicion and strove to keep a jump ahead. The history of 'popular fronts', 'united fronts', 'national fronts' and 'fatherland fronts' has been a long and sanguinary one, ever since the first major experiment in China.

The more successful application of the same technique in various eastern European countries over the past two years would seem less the proof of a more effective application of Marxist analysis, than the result of the presence of a new factor, the victorious Soviet army, playing the rôle of helping on the historical process, for which it was originally intended.

Because of the Marxist fidelity to the belief that a sharpening of class antagonisms must hurry forward the day of proletarian triumph, the Russians have at other times used the still more dangerous technique of deliberately provoking reaction in order to force the working-class to accept their leadership against a thoroughgoing right-wing dictatorship. The classic instance of this is of course the conduct of the German communists in the last years of Weimar. Both in Italy and France to-day we see the same line of thought uppermost, although in this case the position is complicated by the time factor involved in the Soviet race against the Marshall plan.

In this way, and only in this way, can the successive twists and turns in Soviet policy be given a rational meaning, and a policy for dealing with the Soviet Government devised. It is clear that it is useless to listen to the well-meaning but obtuse publicists of the type of Mr. J. B. Priestley, who suggest that personal non-political contacts can minimize friction. Perhaps they could do so, but the Soviet rulers have no intention of allowing the



nothing element to work in more than an outward direction. It is equally obtuse to imagine that we shall get anywhere by announcing that all is over, that further discussion is only appeasement, and that devotion to democracy demands a preventive war at once. We can see from the record of these thirty years that Soviet policy cannot be harmonized with that of other powers by invoking a general will to peace or an ultimate goal of world-government, for these are ruled out by the nature of the Soviet creed.

What we can do perhaps is to persuade the Soviet rulers (they will have no difficulty in passing on the new "line" to their people) that the moment is unpropitious for a further expansion of the communist nucleus and that a period of settling down and internal strengthening is called for. One has heard this point of view attacked as simply allowing the Soviet Union to get stronger unhampered, in order to attack us at a subsequent stage. But to believe this, is to believe that the Soviet system is capable of more rapid progress than the free world. Of that there is no evidence as yet. For the rest we must rely on time to eliminate, even from Russian minds, the delusions which have haunted them for three decades. No-one has yet seen what prosperity will do for the Soviet mentality.

Soviet foreign policy is no enigma. Its roots can be explained and its more local manifestations can be understood. It arises from the particular circumstances of the Soviet Union, often misinterpreted by a too rigid application either of Marxist formulae, or (as in the case of the Dardanelles) influenced by strategic concepts perhaps irrelevant to the air age. The new Machiavellians can be very simple-minded. We also have a long-range opportunity of studying their techniques, the alternate abuse and seductiveness in their public relations with other governments, the training of cadres for the next phase of expansion. When we look at the cabinet ministers of half Europe to-day we can see what the real purpose of the Comintern was. In the invaluable Canadian *Blue Book* on Soviet espionage one can trace the methods used to divert well-meaning people in other countries from their native allegiance to a blind adherence to the dictates of Moscow. If historical knowledge can bring wisdom, there should be no need for despair.

(The author is Reader in the *Comparative Study of Institutions* at Oxford University.)

## UNIFICATION OF THE BALKANS

BY GEORGE PENDLE

IT is a sad and dangerous mistake to consider the present state of affairs in the Balkans as the product exclusively of post-war Kremlin machinations. For a number of years the Oxford English Dictionary—an institution which any way is not over-hasty in its pronouncements—has listed the verb “to Balkanize,” defining it as “to divide an area into small States antagonistic to each other.” Who, then, has been responsible for dividing the Balkans? The answer, perhaps, is another question: who<sup>1</sup> hasn’t had some share in creating and maintaining the division?

*Free Bulgaria*, a periodical published in English at Sofia, is of course unjust in propagating the view that all attempts at South Slav unification were frustrated only by “German and English reactionaries.” In the 1870’s, for example, when the Turks in their effort to extinguish Greek and Serb influence in Macedonia created the Bulgarian Exarchate, Russia gave her support to that movement. Russia fearing the pressure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, helped to finance Bulgarian churches, schools and newspapers which (as Rebecca West has truly said) “had no other object than to turn the Serbs into Bulgarians.” Of course that was before the Marxist era; but as one of our diplomats remarked, “history does not repeat itself; geography does,” and the present-day Pan-Slavism of Premier Dimitrov is rooted in the ancient soil of Macedonia, where East and West alike intrigue and fight for power.

The estuary of the Danube, the Dardanelles, the fertile plains and the strategic headlands and islands: these are the prizes, whether the rulers on either side be emperors or commissars. Pan-Slavism in Russian hands was formerly, just as much as was Anglo-German capitalist-imperialism, an instrument for maintaining disunity in this great buffer area. Now that Anglo-German capitalist-imperialism is in a condition of decay or convalescence, Pan-Slavism, sponsored by Russia, is more genuinely a unifying force, capable perhaps of filling the Balkan vacuum, which has been caused by the disappearance of the western balance of power. Pan-Slavia would unite all the South Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bulgarians, Montenegrins and Macedonians) in a State extending from Trieste on the Adriatic to Varna on the Black Sea, an area of 140,000 square miles with a population of twenty-three millions. That vast community would of course be “affiliated” to the U.S.S.R. Can an expenditure of dollars prevent its consummation? That has been the issue in recent months, and that is the background against which Tito-



Dimitrov pacts, Cominform, and indecisive guerrilla warfare in Greece, must be considered.

It is to be observed most especially that, though *Pravda* councils caution, Russia has again chosen Sofia as the strategic centre and the government of Premier Dimitrov occupy the position of the earlier Bulgarian Exarchate. The present campaign revives the ancient aspirations of the South Slavs, with the added attraction that it offers to all the many millions of peasants and workers a vision of economic and political justice. Their former local oppressors, allied, we are told, to western capitalist interests, are in exile, or executed, or in gaol. No labourer or factory-operative desires the return of these representatives of the old order. What, indeed, has the former way of life to offer him?

Before the last war "constitutional monarchies" existed in all the Balkan countries. In all but one of those lands the court was a lavish superstructure surrounded by corruption, intrigue, and violence, while in that other land the king had delegated authority to a reactionary dictator. In all the Balkan States without exception great wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few families while the common man lived in extreme poverty. That was how democracy, supposedly on the western model, manifested itself on Balkan soil. Greek merchants and shipowners accumulated fortunes, while the only possession of an aged peasant in the mountains would be a solitary and scraggy goat. On the outskirts of Belgrade profiteers of the inner-circle built the luxury mansions of Dedinje ("our Maginot line", mocked the cynics in 1939) in sight of the plains where droves of men and women turned and re-turned the black soil for a pittance. King Boris was at Sofia and King Carol at Bucharest: two monarchs who treated their countries as a private investment.

During the war the monarchies were, so to say, in suspense. After Hitler's invasion of Russia, resistance to German occupation was largely conducted by extreme left-wing groups. Never before had local communists possessed such power. The Germans departed, the Russians drove south, and the frontiers of the western world receded to Vienna and Athens (with Salonika as a precarious outpost). The western powers naturally hoped to see their own type of government restored at Belgrade, Sofia, and Bucharest, and they did effect the restoration in Athens. The people of the Balkans, however, had no desire to return to the days of Boris, Stoyadinovich, Lupescu and Metaxas; and much had happened since 1939. The royal courts—with the exception of the imprisoned coterie at Bucharest—had dispersed. The foreign employees of western capitalism (utility companies, petroleum, and so on) had been away in their homelands for six or seven years. The might of Russia had been felt. Local left-wing groups were efficiently organized, well armed, and had no intention of returning to permanent poverty in the fields, mountains and slums so long as the U.S.S.R. offered them prospects of an alternative social order. The achievement of Great Britain and the U.S.A. at the

Athenian bridgehead, where all the old politicians came back into office, did not encourage the more northern States to accept similar restorations.

The Balkan area owed its former "independence" to the rivalries of the great powers, none of whom would tolerate the domination of the Dardanelles and the Danube delta by any one of their number. The internal balance was established and preserved by the division of the territory into autonomous and dissatisfied nations with rival royal houses and highly disputable frontiers. From time to time the frontiers were altered, but the personal interests of the ruling monarchs and their respective privileged entourage (at court, in politics, and in proprietorship of land and industry) remained constant. As the local population in all these States has always contained a high percentage of political and financial adventurers and congenital bandits (whom the terrain greatly favours), it was not difficult to maintain the balancing friction. Yet in memory and through legend the inhabitants of Balkania never ceased to be dimly, and usually dumbly, conscious of their common heritage. They had fought, dispersedly but in essential unity, against the Turk, and had ultimately triumphed. They never forgot that they were all basically Slavs. To effect the dreamt-of unification several conditions were needed : among the great powers, a weakening, either to the east or the west ; the emergence of a common organization throughout the Balkan area, unrestricted by frontiers, Slav in essence, offering better prospects for the poorer classes, and having the sympathetic support of whichever of the external powers had acquired greatest immediate strength ; and, finally, a centre and a figurehead. All these requirements are now in existence. The west is passing through a period of weakness and indecision. The Slav-Communist organization is very much alive, supported by Moscow. Sofia is a centre, and Premier Dimitrov a figurehead. Disapproval and opposition from the west have only served, of course, to favour the Slav-Communist cohesion. Progressively, step by step, with a truly Marxist air of inevitability the South Slav Federal Communist State is being formed while UNO and U.S. missions nibble around the southern edges of the embryo. The principal question is : how soon, and how completely, does Russia wish the federalization to be effected ?

In Greece Europe and European life-forms disintegrate. The land itself—as though under the influence of the eastern sun—breaks up into irregular promontories and rocky islands. Further north, in the great mountains, and the tremendous, earthy plains, Europe is lost and bogged irremediably. In this vast area the Russians, alone among non-Balkan peoples, are at home. Schacht came here with disreputable barter schemes and hordes of "tourists", and finally Hitler with armies ; but the black earth is not acquired so easily : it must be lived on and lived with. The Americans are now planning to penetrate with dollars and public services (food, capital goods, arms, and experts), but they will not stay, even though their warships, hundreds of miles away in the Aegean, train their guns



land. The Balkans are not won so easily. They must be colonized by a labouring people, races to whom the black soil is not an accident to be exploited, but the basis of a life to be lived. Here the Russians are in their element. They realize that there is something to be made, not out of this land (or not exclusively out of it), but in it. This is a great new world on their frontier, peopled by races who share many of their dreams and who desire most ardently many of the social improvements which Communism so convincingly presents.

The Balkan people have waited long for their unification. At the time of my last Balkan commentary in *THE FORTNIGHTLY* (June 1940) they were reluctantly looking to Germany, not as saviour indeed, but as a force that would break the fratricidal stalemate. The desperate illusion passed. The German invasion of the Balkans and of Russia showed how futile the hope had been. But the fact that it occurred at all, reveals the urgent need that exists. The deep-felt wish is that the term "Balkanization" shall be rendered archaic, a relic of an unhappy—and, as far as the local people are concerned, an unnecessary—past.

There are, of course, many disruptive influences—religious, cultural, racial, and economic—within the south Slav area itself. The strength of the Slav-communist approach, is in the twofold nature of its appeal, which to some extent nullifies those antagonisms. Non-Slavs (Jews, etc.) are liable to be attracted by the communist mystic, while a considerable percentage of local non-communists, being Slavs, are dazzled by the vision of imminent south Slav unification.

What can the U.S.A., Great Britain, and UNO offer to the Balkan people, and how can they make their wishes prevail? Their special contribution would be food and clothing, financial assistance, and parliamentary democracy. Although food, clothing and money are a temptation, however, parliamentary democracy in the Balkans signifies irresponsible party politics, corruption, and chaos: it has been tried, and found deficient. In any case a programme of this nature could not be put into operation until the western powers had undertaken a full-scale invasion of the Balkans, removed all governments north of Greece, and extinguished all resistance in the mountains, fields and streets of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Rumania: an operation which would be repugnant to everyone concerned and anyway impracticable. Therefore, I believe, the whole present Anglo-American-UNO campaign is miscalculated and destined not only to be ineffective but, worse, to create rather than allay friction. The longer it is continued, the more difficult will be its termination, short of war. The weight of the Balkan reality is too great for such schemes to succeed. No external non-Slav force, no matter how well-intentioned it may be, can hinder the now slow, now rapid, process towards south Slav cohesion. Least of all can the west deflect the course of events when it has no demonstrably satisfactory way of life to propose as an alternative; no surer prospect of lasting peace and plenty to offer

than that which the local inhabitants have already, in part at least, accepted as valid ; and when the western " fifth column " is generally discredited and largely suppressed throughout the area. If there is to be a change in the state of affairs in the Balkans, it must come from within, after a long period of trial, suffering, and disillusionment. The revolution is too youthful and too charged with impetus to be halted now ; and the west has not the means to interrupt its progress. Latterly, indeed, western statesmen in their anti-Russian speeches have tacitly admitted that they are no longer concerned with the fate of the Balkans as such. It is not yet apparent, however, that they have understood the background—history, legend, dream and nightmare—which haunts and inspires the south Slav peoples. Until they do so, their policy in south-eastern Europe will be insecure in its foundations and mischievous in its influence.

During the past two years the pronouncements of Western statesmen and journalists have created in our hemisphere a view of the Balkans which is in many respects inaccurate. We have been informed day by day, week by week, that a group of small and hitherto independent and blissful nations are being raped by the U.S.S.R., brutally compelled to adopt Communism, and against their will organized in an anti-western bloc. This picture of the Balkans has been reproduced with such frequency and insistence that it must now have been accepted by the majority of the British public as correct and sufficient. Popular conceptions of this nature are not easily eradicated. They tend to perpetuate themselves, and to foster similar inaccuracies on the other side of the frontier, breeding resentment, fear and hatred. Slav leaders now claim that while they themselves are working for the unification of the Balkans, the western governments are striving to re-establish the pre-war division of the area into small States, independent in theory, but dependent on western finance in practice. This accusation is true, so far as it goes. The Slav statesmen do not complete the story by explaining that when we have split the Balkans into pieces once again, we intend to gather the fragments tenderly and conscientiously unto UNO's synthetic and supposedly synthesizing bosom, where all past differences will be forgotten and all present troubles smoothed away.



## ITALY'S NEW CONSTITUTION

By G. E. TREVES

ITALY is the latest of the twenty-odd countries to have adopted a new constitution since the end of the war. The charter does not claim the finality which the Yugoslavs, Italy's eastern neighbours, have attached to theirs, nor does it limit itself to providing for institutions most suitable for the present, as her neighbours to the west of the Alps are said to have done with the constitution of the fourth French Republic. Neither Catholicism, nor Liberalism, nor Marxism, the springs which supply the streams and rivers of an intricate party system, has achieved in Italy a definite success over the others. The constitution is a compromise between them, for this was the only way in which its approval could at present be secured. But, on the whole, it leaves room for democracy to choose its own forms and is symbolic of the drive for the reconstruction of the country, with a view to the time when conditions become settled. The constitution of the Italian Republic, which came into force in 1948 follows the *Statuto* of March 1848, a compromise too, between absolute monarchy and the principles of 1789. From its inception, this constitution was interpreted as meaning that the ministers were responsible to parliament, and a parliamentary system could thus be developed. The fascists never repealed it, though they made piece-meal inroads. On the contrary, some of their earlier reforms were presented as "a return to the *statuto*." This occurred, for instance, when the Government ceased to be responsible to parliament, or when Roman Catholicism was confirmed as the religion of the State after the pacts with the Vatican.

When Italy was free again the nation was able for the first time to choose its own institutions directly, through the referendum for the republic and against the monarchy in June 1946, and indirectly, through the Constituent Assembly, elected on the same occasion. The Assembly's main duty was that of preparing a constitution and putting an end to the vacuum which had prevailed since the fall of Fascism. The fact that after the liberation the business of the State could be carried out in an orderly way, even if not always efficiently, is a testimony that the Italians are earnestly concentrating on the task of *refaire l'apprentissage de la liberté*, which the French too have set for themselves. The drafting committee, which included some of the most learned lawyers and the most skilled politicians, worked thoroughly, holding almost 400 meetings. But the Assembly's attention and time were diverted by repeated Government crises and votes of confidence and the ratification of the peace treaty, so

that in the end the most delicate measures had to be rushed through.

The atmosphere at Montecitorio became particularly heated over two subjects : the endorsement of the Lateran pacts, concluded by Mussolini and Pius XI, and the partition of the territory into regional units. Sections of the left found themselves on the side of sections of the right in opposing the provisions, though the Christian Democrats won the day in both cases. This shows, however, that in Italy the problem of relations between capital and labour may be overshadowed by other great historical issues, such as the relations between State and Church and between north and south, which still retain much of their emotional power. The interest of the public at large dwindled, with general apathy towards politics, after the bitter realization that the Constituent Assembly was not in itself the promised magic wand and that the economic crisis was mowing down more and more victims. When the job was completed, the comment : " It is a poor constitution, but it is, nevertheless, a constitution," summed up the widespread impression. And, Italy having many wits as well as many cynics, much of the aura of solemnity which usually surrounds documents of this kind was lost in the proceedings. In the end, few members felt like opening the charter " in the name of God ", because, as the veteran statesman Signor Nitti put it, " God is too great and our quarrels too small." But the political parties seem to be satisfied with the points they have gained, and in the campaign now warming up for the dual spring elections they all pledged themselves to defend the constitution against the attacks expected from their opponents. Though hardly mentioned in the script, much of the success of the play depends on the parties, the producers. The lawyers are particularly harsh in their criticisms, but then the technical defects arising from political bargaining and the desire to please everybody give them plenty of reasons—and, already, plenty of work.

If the constitution implies future changes, not only in the political but also in the social and economic fields, this is due, to a large extent, to its being in the nature of a compromise. Contrasting trends often nullified one another, and the result was a middle course. But, in any case, the very fact that such a document could be agreed upon in the agitated aftermath of war is in itself a remarkable achievement and a good omen. On the whole, there are no leaps in the dark. But, as the main parties are confident of gaining supremacy in the near future, the constitution contains wide loopholes, is silent on some of the more important topics and vague on others ; sweeping transformations will thus act like a delayed action fuse. After interminable discussions, for instance, nothing better could be found than to adopt the French text, laying down that " the right to strike is exercised within the framework of the laws regulating it," which leaves things more or less as they were. The Christian Democrats and the Communists, the more compact mass movements, sometimes found themselves in what their antagonists call an unnatural alliance. In some



stances, this was simply a compromise. The Christian Democrats had their way with "ethical and social relations," recognizing the family "as a natural society founded on marriage," and with the rights of non-State schools, which are kept mostly by religious bodies. The Communists, like the left in general, had reason to be satisfied with provisions dealing with economic relations, and especially the right and duty to work, the admission of economic planning, restrictions on private initiative and property and the workers' share in management. The original claims had, of course, to be scaled down on all sides. Deeper factors appear in other instances. Both Christian Democrats and Communists showed dislike for a merely negative conception of individual liberty and wanted to be granted for a certain end or exercised in a certain way, the former because of their suspicion of the French revolutionary declarations, and the latter because of the example of the Soviet constitution. The Communists' support for the Lateran pacts or, lately, for the Christian Democratic planing toward proportional representation in the elections for the Senate, however, is due to political reasons not connected with the constitution.

Some obvious, formal faults have already been generally acknowledged. The drafting committee intended its work to be "brief, simple and clear, so that the whole people may understand it." The result is 139 Articles, some of which are very long and very involved and not without contradictions. There are too many rhetorical statements: "all citizens have equal social dignity"; "the Republic protects labour"; voting is a "civic duty" and "the defence of the Fatherland is a sacred duty"; and, above all, Article 1, according to which "Italy is a democratic Republic founded on labour; sovereignty belongs to the people." And there are too many unenforceable promises: "it is the Republic's task to remove obstacles of an economic and social nature, which . . . hamper the full development of the individual"; "any citizen unfit to work and without the necessary means of support is entitled to maintenance and social assistance." These are more suited to a political manifesto than to a law. One of the opening "fundamental principles" states that the Republic protects the countryside, and the Republic is also called upon to favour and support mountain areas, co-operatives, art-craft and savings. Signor Luini testifies that so many groups knocked at the door of the Assembly, leading for "a little Article" which would raise their rank, that someone ironically proposed the protection of the railway time-table as well. There is also a wealth of bureaucratic detail, which could have found a better place in ordinary legislation, amendable by normal process, while in more important issues the streamlining is perhaps excessive.

All this, however, should not prevent the recognition of some of the substantial merits of the charter. A brief analysis of its main points will show that not only does it allow a further growth but that it also remains in the wake of Italian constitutional experience. The Assembly resisted the temptations of a presidential régime of the American type and reverted

to the parliamentary, already working in practice in the last few months, after the monarchy had performed its last function as a link with the past. There is also an honest endeavour to seek remedies for the failures which contributed to the downfall of democracy in Italy and to solve some of the problems of the modern State and post-war Europe. Help is often given by the constitutions of foreign countries, and especially, as a hundred years before, by that of France, whose difficulties have never been so similar.

The way in which the fascists tore apart the letter and spirit of the former constitution suggested two main defences, meeting with almost general consent. One was the adoption of a "rigid" system, placing obstacles in the way of its alteration, and the other the embodiment in the main text of a long series of "declarations" of individual and social rights, instead of leaving them in the limbo of a preamble.

The first method consists of a special process for the revision of the constitution and the setting up of a special court to judge constitutional issues. Revision is not carried out by a body *ad hoc*, but by parliament, each of its two chambers reading the amendment a second time after an interval of at least three months; an absolute majority of the members of each chamber being required in the second voting. In compliance with the dogma of popular sovereignty, the bill may be submitted to a referendum, if this is demanded by one-fifth of the members of one of the chambers, or 500,000 electors, or five regional councils. But, while the alteration of some of the technical details which abound in the charter may be transformed into a nation-wide question for party purposes, the people may be debarred from judging on a fundamental political change, when a two-thirds majority is attained through some bargaining in the second reading. The constitutional court is composed of legal experts but has a strong political colour, only one-third of its members being chosen by the high courts and the remaining two-thirds by the President of the Republic and Parliament, all for twelve years. The court decides on conflicts of jurisdiction between the powers of the State (though the separation of powers is far from complete), between the State and the regions, and between the regions themselves, and can declare null and void an unconstitutional act. The many statements of principle embodied in the charter will make the task of the judges a very delicate one. The Communists have already revealed their fear lest, like its American model, it may become the supporter of "social statics", when maintaining that parliamentary proceedings are surrounded by sufficient guarantees to prevent infringements of the constitution. But the Italians are realists. They feel that, as one of them has said, the constitution, like peace, is indivisible, and that these provisions will only work as long as the constitution as a whole is working and respected.

On the second point, about one-third of the constitution is devoted to a bill of rights. Equality before the law, the classic liberties and the new social rights meet with a generous treatment. Even the right of asylum



nds recognition. Contrary to the tradition of common law countries, however, more emphasis is often laid on the proclamation of principles than in securing their implementation and offering remedies for their violation. A drawback of this unbusiness-like conception is that, while recognizing, for instance, freedom of opinion and of the press, the constitution refers to ordinary legislation for restrictions. The subsequent discussions on the Press Bill before the Assembly have shown that many controversial issues are left unresolved. Again, when social matters are in question, it is no use admitting full employment and the right of unemployed workers to an adequate allowance, when there is no proper machinery or means for the purpose. The text is so elastic that it allows future legislation to direct public and private economic activity to social ends by planning and controls. Private property is guaranteed, but the law may restrict it in such a way as to render it accessible to all. The law may also reserve or transfer undertakings dealing with essential social services, sources of energy or monopolies to the State, public bodies or communities of workers or consumers. A considerable measure of economic liberalism or socialist control is equally possible.

The kernel of the constitution concerns parliament, the President of the Republic and the Government, in an effort to balance their powers. Its authors are well aware that nineteenth-century parliament and cabinet government has lost some of its meaning before the rule of the great parties, but the new formula has not yet been discovered. Parliament is composed of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. They may sit together, for instance, for the election of the President of the Republic. They are both elected directly and, apart from the higher minimum age prescribed for the senate and a slight stress on its regional basis, there is little difference in their membership. The ghost of corporatism and the claims of the large parties for "inorganic" representation proved to be obstacles too great for the success of the projects to link the upper chamber with some professional or trade interest or particular experience. About a hundred former parliamentarians will enter the first senate by right, and afterwards only five life senators are to be appointed by the President of the Republic for special merits. The two chambers have equal powers, as in the 1848 constitution, and no provision deals with their mutual relations. Great tact will certainly be required on both sides. The law-making process is confined to the two chambers, with the exclusion of the President of the Republic, in whose hands only a kind of atrophied veto is left in the power to ask them to reconsider a bill. The people may intervene in two ways: not less than 50,000 electors may introduce a bill and 500,000 electors or five regional councils may call for a popular referendum to decide on the repeal of some legislative enactment, provided it does not refer to finance, amnesty or international treaties. As usual, over-drastring measures are buttressed by conditions and exceptions. The introduction of this second instrument

to test public opinion is nevertheless viewed with some misgiving, as it may still be recklessly exploited by political parties and local interests, with paralysing consequences. It is argued that this institution may be good for Switzerland, but not for present-day Italy, and it is feared that the referendum may lower parliamentary prestige. To some extent, the people can vie with parliament for legal as well as political sovereignty.

An interesting feature is the way in which the plight of parliament before the increasing mass of legislation is tackled. Every bill is examined by a committee of each chamber, and then by the whole assembly. The standing orders may establish not only special procedures in cases of urgency, but also the "cases and forms" in which the examination and approval of a bill is sent to committee, which may be permanent and must reflect the proportion of parliamentary groups in its composition. Until finally approved, the bill can still be remitted for consideration by the whole chamber, when the Government, one-tenth of the assembly or one-fifth of the committee asks for it. The intervention of the whole chamber is always required for bills dealing with constitutional, electoral, international and financial matters. As a result, the Government can only legislate provisionally in exceptional circumstances, under the stress of necessity and urgency, thus removing the plague of the decree-law, and parliament is summoned to ratify its measures within five days. Legislative powers cannot be delegated to the Government, unless the principles and directives are laid down, for a limited period and specific subjects.

The President of the Republic is elected by a joint sitting of parliament, with the addition of regional delegates. Like his French counterpart, he remains in office for seven years, but his powers are even more restricted, as he does not preside over cabinet meetings, according to the example set by Victor Emmanuel III in his reign of almost half-a-century. The Government he appoints has to enjoy the confidence of parliament, and his weapon of the dissolution of parliament is somewhat blunted by the need of having the co-operation of the Prime Minister. Even war has to be decided by parliament. From the monarchy he inherits the command of the armed forces, to which he adds the chair of the supreme defence council and of the higher judiciary council.

The draftsmen of the constitution took great care in securing some stability for the Government, while at the same time submitting it to parliamentary control. The Government must enjoy the confidence of both chambers, but, to avoid sudden "assaults on the ministerial coach" the motion of non-confidence has to state its grounds, be signed by at least one-tenth of the members of the chamber and cannot be discussed within three days of its introduction. The rejection by one or both chambers of a government proposal does not entail an obligation to resign. The leading position which the Prime Minister has acquired in democratic régimes and the disagreements within the coalition governments of the recent past have led to the recognition that he directs the general policy of



the Government and maintains its political and administrative unity. It must govern and not become a parliamentary committee.

The constitution tries to build up the judiciary as a third power, inasmuch as judges acquire independence from the executive, which they lacked before, although their career is entrusted to the higher judiciary council, which is presided over by the President of the Republic and one-third of the membership of which is elected by parliament.

The greatest novelty is the introduction of regional units, besides the municipalities and the provinces into which, on the French pattern, Italy is administratively divided. Regionalism was one of the ideals of the Risorgimento, and held also by a unitarian like Mazzini, but the fear of a return of the political splits between the old states, and the centralizing drive which ensued, prevented its realization. The aspiration toward self-government and devolution was only natural after the fascist interlude. To this were to be added the poorer south's grievance (deepened by the wartime fracture), that it was exploited by the industrial north, and the separatist or federalist sentiments rooted in the large islands of Sicily and Sardinia, and the frontier areas of the valley of Aosta, Alto Adige and Venezia Giulia, with mixed populations. The setting up of intermediate bodies between the State and the provinces, based on historic, economic or dialect elements, was thought to meet the various tendencies, giving free play to local energies, but without straining the frail structure of the State. The Christian Democrats took the lead in the reform, perhaps, it is suggested, because their neo-Guelf tradition had kept them apart from the conception of the centralists. The Constituent Assembly, at its last sittings approved in great haste the statutes of the two islands and of two of the three bilingual regions entitled to an exceptional régime. "Autonomy" is more accentuated in Sicily, with a local parliament and government, a section of the supreme court and financial facilities. Still, this is not the federation of republics that the unitarians deprecate. The nineteen regions enjoy law-making powers in matters mainly of local interest and expressly reserved to their jurisdiction, within the limits of the fundamental principles laid down by the State legislation, and always provided they are not in conflict with the national interest or that of other regions. Administration is limited to the same subjects. The region may collect taxes and receive quotas from the State revenue. It is self-governing, but some kind of control will be exercised by a central Government agent. Many of the practical problems are still open and, in the end, it is in the spirit in which they are tackled that this experiment will succeed or fail.

*(The author was formerly lecturer in Public Law in Italian universities.)*

## THE WOMEN OF GERMANY

BY PAMELA HINKSON

NO description can prepare the mind for the indescribable ruin of German cities. I came, I thought, inoculated to shock, having received that last year. But the further away from war, the more one sees this desolation against an imaginary normal world. A woman, Berlin resident before the war, said, suggesting much for thought : " One gets fond of one's own ruins." And she spoke of Berlin to-day, a battleground of political ideologies, set deep in the Russian Zone, still Germany's capital and immensely conscious of that. Berlin was more alive than other cities, she said, for those very facts.

In the country there has been re-creation. Tilled fields, bright stretches of winter wheat, tidy gardens, farmyards, white fowl starry against the brown ; new houses, others being built, and country people looking healthier. Many reported that the town food situation would be better if the country people were more ready to share their produce, the collection of which is now a German responsibility.

The " receptiveness " of the German mind in conjunction with the emptiness of German stomachs was striking. Audiences will travel miles against immense difficulties, to listen, discuss, often showing a preoccupation with the abstract, startling against the background of Europe now.

I saw amazing endurance, industry and courage, particularly among the women to whom the survival of life at all is mainly due. Working without tools, mending, fashioning something out of what would be waste elsewhere. In Westphalia, in a former *Luftwaffe* camp taken over by a charitable organization, the undamaged buildings were being made ready to receive various occupants—difficult boys, orphan girls. One house held a school of women social workers who provided the food for the other establishments. They were at their mid-day meal—of vegetable soup—when we arrived. The young woman in charge showed us over the house and recited their difficulties—not whining, but laughing after each item, as one might telling a friend of a day that has gone wrong. No fuel except the sparse cooking supply, no light (electric bulbs are almost unobtainable), no cleaning cloths—not even a rag with which to clean the floor, which nevertheless was clean. She finished : " And the greater the difficulties, the greater the comradeship ! "

I saw an orphanage in the suburbs of the ruined city. A citizen had given the house, the children were gathered into it under the sheltering



kindness of the Sisters. The dormitories held as many tiny cots as could be fitted in, probably omitting some hygienic rules. But the rooms were pretty—evergreens on the dining tables. An older boy lending a hand smiled confidently at the young nun who showed us round. The small children were having their meal of soup. One cried and was comforted.

In that university town, most of it rubble, many male students lived in the bunkers. It was difficult, a professor explained, because they had no light by which to study at night. Twenty miles outside the town a college for girl students had been established in a group of disused huts. These girls rose daily at six, breakfasted on a piece of bread, waited at the station sometimes for an hour for an uncertain train, travelled, attended lectures, lunching on vegetable soup at mid-day and returned to the same net at evening. Yet they sang songs and talked eagerly; they had transformed their huts into a semblance of college bed-sitting rooms. Fires warmed them. Fuel was then more plentiful than I had expected, the future supply was uncertain. Some girls did not look well, others not so different from their London contemporaries. I asked the principal how they worked on that diet. She said: "It is a miracle."

Those girl students were politically unaware. Puzzling there and elsewhere was an apparent acceptance of their living conditions, an absence of question as to the origin of the catastrophe. Age and habit here perhaps were largely explanatory. But girl fellow students of these, on another occasion, were gropingly conscious of their political responsibility. The latter group had a religious affiliation. I observed repeatedly that the older women, grown up before 1914, had clearer minds often than the younger women. When I talked of the women's movement in Britain, emphasizing a history of reforms brought by adventurous individuals, men and women, I was asked: "What age does one have to be to join the Women's Movement?" The habit of organization persisted.

In youth clubs, perched on Rhineland hilltops, groups of youth leaders, young men and women, were attending courses. One group was studying hymn-making under a gentle old professor who fitted in with the fairy-tale toys, made with beautiful craftsmanship out of scraps of wood from boxes which had held supplies sent by relief organizations. These youth leaders represented different groups, Catholic, Evangelical, Workers, and Communist-influenced parties. No conflict was discernible as they sang and danced together—these occasions started and ended with a song. The youth organizer talked to us beforehand, stressing the emphasis laid on "guidance" in their training as the mission for youth leaders—"We don't want any *Führers* to arise!" In the tidy dormitories we saw the new notice form—the old "*Verboten*" banished—instead the prefix "*Bitte*" requested certain rules—that guests should not put their boots on the bed and so on. At another youth hostel, over a mid-day meal of porridge without milk, the young organizer, who had served on the Russian front and had resisted joining the Hitler Youth, told us of the

astonishment of some of his youth leaders who had come from the Eastern Zone, at finding the British C.C.G. youth officer so friendly a colleague. It was an inspiring experience to watch the relations of these officers of the Education Branch with the young Germans. Now, under the inspired leadership of Mr. Robert Birley, the educational work is the most significant thing in our administration.

Class consciousness and separation between the middle and working classes was strikingly more evident than in Britain to-day. Evident too, an unchanged narrowness of scholastic minds that could not look beyond their immediate walls or even, it seemed, discover that they had been broken. And those patient and often heroic German teachers continuing their traditional task with improvised tools seemed, like other German workers, imaginative indeed in capacity for making something out of nothing, but did not look beyond their task to the past for its lessons or to the future, which the application of those lessons would light with hope. The more significant is the mission of the British advisers who may help a younger generation to adventure constructively.

The receptiveness of audiences and groups—these had been trained to receive—combined with general incapacity to give out thought and feeling beyond Germany—even while they asked for news of other countries in an abstract way—became uncanny. The excellent plan of bringing selected parties and individuals to unremembering and unbitter Britain has taught those much, except why the world distrusts Germany. Possibly they will not understand until travel barriers lift and they go to the former occupied countries. From Britain they reported generally the immense kindness received, and this “receiving” people—the tendency increased by their present situation—did not appear to marvel at it. One social worker, asked what struck her most in Britain, replied: “The high standard of living.” Ignorance of difficulties elsewhere, however, was general. At a middle class girls’ school, holding the atmosphere of a past age, girls asked if there was any rationing in England and were surprised to hear that clothes were rationed as well as food.

But in certain quarters, particularly among religious people, there was unexpected evidence of war-guilt consciousness. They thanked one for coming, for speaking to them in a “human” way. At a youth leaders’ gathering, the warming of atmosphere in response to a few words, might have been deceptively flattering. “We must build a bridge,” they said often, but laid not a plank from their side. I had spoken deliberately of the suffering of other countries besides Germany. Elsewhere a young girl—in charge of the children’s side of a religious charitable organization—said: “We need help to cross the frontier—we have been so long imprisoned. We ask it not so that we may ask for bread, but for trust. And we know that for years it has been impossible to trust Germany’s word.”

In Berlin, more naïvely, the request for “trust” was made by a young



oman who had joined the Party but had "done nothing", and was now barred from teaching, a ban of which she spoke with strong feeling from her own suffering. There were others present who had done likewise and an old woman who had not conformed and had lost her school, turned on them: "Yes, but you joined. That is why it all happened!" I asked what people about them had felt in 1940. The old woman answered: "I felt sick." I asked the same question in a Westphalian Catholic group who talked of Cardinal von Galen's resistance, and an emotional young woman teacher cried: "It was terrible!" and continued that there had been, even among non-Nazis, a wave of exaltation. They spoke of the history of Germany—the older women went back significantly to pre-1914 history—and how could we British understand, with our tradition of freedom? The Westphalian teacher said: "Write fear over the map of Germany. Now there is de-Nazification." She added: "The devil has ruled in Germany for years!" Yes, she was trying to teach her pupils. "But I would need to teach their parents."

Dr. Agnes von Zahn Harnack, former President of the German Council of Women (dissolved in 1933), in an address given to a group of American women recently on "The Feminist Movement in Germany before Hitler and To-Day," gave the first two questions before German women amid their many problems as:

What can we do to educate women so that they learn to take their share in public life, to form their own political opinion, to realize what has happened to them and to avoid their falling to criminal propaganda a second time?

What can we German women do to work for peace?

She gave an outline of the German feminist movement and its achievements and the reforms brought by its efforts until Hitler ended it. German thought has been singularly without normal feminine influence and when women entered the legal profession, the Minister of Justice welcoming them said: "I hope that the influence of women will change our law from being men's law into being humane law." One of Hitler's first acts was to exclude women largely from the profession. Dr. von Zahn Harnack stated that few leaders of the feminist movement became Party members but that the women who were not trained by it were more open to Nazi-Socialist propaganda. She gave three main reasons for the reaction against women in public life, evident towards the end of the 1920's:

The masculine world became jealous; they felt women to be dangerous; they were anxious about things getting "soft" because women handled them . . . Hitler's influence began to grow and even those who were not his adherents came under the influence of his dangerous pseudo-ideology.

The world crisis began . . . good positions became scarce . . . (there was a tendency to eliminate women from the professions). The political parties refused to put women on good places for the voting list; from year to year, we got less women into the *Reichstag* and the *Länder* Parliaments.

But the women themselves, especially the younger ones, got doubtful about their jobs. A whole generation that had lost its hope for a normal family life and

motherhood in the last world war had now been in professional life for about ten years. And by now many felt that they did not like this kind of life. They began to dream of a sheltered home where they might live, just occupied with their household duties and their children, under protection—and tuition—of a strong man. . . . You know how cleverly Hitler used these dreams for his aims. He based upon them his ideas of a strong hard hero and thus got an enormous influence on a disappointed and confused generation.

The question of the women of Germany is a complex one. I heard that women had been a strong factor in supporting Hitler. German women questioned, did not deny that. Many encouraged their husbands to join the Party, fearing the consequences otherwise to him and their homes. They had dangerous short-term vision. The younger ones, easily swayed to the unbalanced German emotion, were carried away by the attraction of the Hitler Youth.

Long-visioned political education is needed and the mass of German women are still politically uneducated. They have to learn and that is not easy. In Berlin they spoke of the fear of consequences that kept women now from political organizations. German politics, despite efforts to form women's organizations above and outside party—in which Frau Bähnisch, *Regierungspräsident* of Hanover, is prominent—are intensely party politics.

The British Zone alone holds two million more women than men in the twenty to fifty age group, many of them young women who cannot hope for marriage and children and must build a home by their own efforts. This war tragedy is much spoken of by German women, with more self-pity than is shown by their contemporaries of other countries. This sociological problem seems likely to be increased by a continued blind insistence on marriage as woman's only vocation. Their education leads to much inevitable frustration, rather than to a wider vision of women's mission and opportunities and duties as citizens, whether married or single.

One has to discard some preconceived ideas in the mental turmoil that is Germany. One learns that the *Mütterlich* sentiment holds possible perils, like other German sentimentalities that seemed right and wholesome enough—such as the love of the countryside, developed with German intensity—Hitler used these. The woman absorbed in her home exclusively may make no contribution to the ultimate safety of that or of the world, and her ignorance may be a danger since often—like other backward women—she is influential within the home and now has political power also.

When one spoke of women's political potentialities, naturally one was told repeatedly that the present crushing burdens of existence prevented other activities. But one woman added: "The communist women are active—spreading their propaganda in the queues!" The reports were persistent that the communists were better supplied with money, paper and other propaganda ammunition, including fervour, than the other



parties. The women who tried to fight Hitler are mostly now of an older generation. They are a reminder that the concentration camps were made first for Germans as well as for Jews, and that women as well as men went to them. Awareness of the atmosphere—including the uncertainty still of what one's neighbour will do to one—makes clearer the high courage and conscience of such a German as Jakob Kaiser. German women spoke with pride of such women as Frau Luise Schroeder, acting chief burgomaster of Berlin.

A British observer formed the opinion that vocational training for women and trained entry into industry and professions (necessary also economically) would develop responsibility, confidence and thus political consciousness. But the general attitude of men and women towards women in public life in Germany is many years behind that of Britain. German women have to learn with men, work with men, in the co-operation that is comparatively recent here also. Small factors are significant. German men are still concerned for their dignity and may consider helping in the home derogatory. Many German women fear that they may lose their femininity and charm if they enter professions, an important factor with the desire to attract sharpened by the shortage of young men.

The answer to those primary questions put by the last President of the German Council of Women to German women to-day, is one for which the world waits. The women trying bravely to find that answer, are receiving help from the British Education Branch through the admirable section of it devoted to Women's Affairs, but they need more than that section has yet power to give them. It may be that Women's Affairs hold the key to the future of Germany and of Europe.

## WHY DRAG RELIGION INTO EDUCATION ?

BY J. S. WHALE

WHAT kind of citizens do we want our children to be ? This is the question which Plato asked, which thoughtful people have been asking at intervals ever since, and which has an obvious urgency to-day when the civilized world is aware that the shape of things to come threatens to be a shapeless ruin.

Milton's famous *Tractate on Education* written 300 years ago is now necessarily out of date, but there is a very modern ring about its opening appeal for the reform of education as "one of the greatest and noblest designs that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this nation perishes." It is an appeal which civilized people everywhere are again addressing to their teachers in schools, colleges and universities. In England we have had the Fleming Report of 1943 and the Education Act of 1944, promising a wide extension of educational opportunities which have hitherto been the privilege of the few.

But this raises fundamental questions. What *is* education ? What is the essential function of the modern teacher at every stage of the curriculum between nursery school and university ? What should our newly founded people's colleges in Great Britain aim at doing ? Again, there are the questions provoked with increasing frequency by the secularist temper of our age : Why drag in religion ? Is 'true religion' the necessary complement of 'sound learning' ; and, if so, why ?

I would say three things in answer, arranging them in an ascending order of importance.

### I

In the first and least important place, we must not only admit but insist that it is the business of the teacher to impart and interpret 'secular' information. I say 'secular', because there is no specifically Christian or Moslem or atheistic way of writing a French composition or solving a quadratic equation. Whether it be about tangents or Milton's sonnets, a French idiom or a reflecting galvanometer—knowledge is the indispensable basis of education, the necessary condition of learning how to think. Indeed, there are at least two reasons why this emphasis on the factual basis of learning is still important.

One is the false antithesis between knowledge and character which is still prevalent. "Blimps" are often guilty of it on a school prize day, and if they run true to form, they rarely fail to convey the suggestion that academic proficiency is all very well but that we ought to be suspicious

it. This is not only sentimental nonsense of a pernicious and dangerous kind ; it provokes a reaction which perpetuates the false antithesis in a new form. For example, after the fall of Singapore a Fellow of All Souls wrote a letter to *The Times*, which was widely commented upon. He attacked the public schools for the disproportionate value which they attached to character rather than to intelligence, saying that this was a wrong emphasis for which we were now paying the price in every field of national life, in the conduct of the war, in politics, in administration, in the Services, and in the Empire. " What we want," he wrote, " is more intelligence, putting ability and clear thinking before education in its spiritual aspect." The positive point which he was making is indubitably right. When Colonel Blimp belittles school-boy efficiency at, say, trigonometry or German irregular verbs, he is an obvious menace to his own side in time of war, with its propaganda technique, its mechanized armies, its demand for accurate scientific and mathematical knowledge, in the air, inside the tank and under the sea. But the further point to be made here is that merely to reverse the terms of a false antithesis is to perpetuate its falsity. The formula which we want here is not ' either intellect or character', but ' both intellect and character'. In short, the answer to a false antithesis between the secular and the religious in education is not the same antithesis in reverse, but a true synthesis.

The ' secularism ' which is to-day making its rightful claim is better known as science. It owes its immense prestige to the fact that it has put all things in modern culture been the most sincere as well as the most successful. It is the most coherent and most massive achievement of human civilization. Its brilliant successes are the result of exact observation, painstaking experiment and precise statement ; and because this scientific temper is a mental discipline of immense value, modern education rightly repudiates the antithesis which is too easily and too often made between the natural sciences and the humanities, between ' facts ' and ' values '.

The second justification for this respect for the factual and the experimental is that it is constantly threatened by a different educational technique. When Sir John Adams said that all teachers might be roughly divided into two groups, the " good old grinders " and the " primrose-pathers ", he was surely right in adding that there is something to be said for both groups. On the one hand, the danger of not seeing the wood for the trees is notorious ; children may spend years in learning Latin and French grammar without being able to read either language when they leave school. But, on the other hand, unless children learn to be exact and competent (really mastering the rudiments of a subject—their tables, for instance), they will not escape the greatest danger to which the primrose path is always exposed—namely, knowing a little about everything but not very much about anything. Indeed, teachers of history on both sides of the Atlantic know the temptation of allowing themselves to be divided



into Sir John's two groups ; the one advocating an excessive concentration on dates and details, the other teaching history as sociology, with little regard for the discipline of precise facts but with much dubious elaboration of tendencies and trends. In his Romanes Lecture, *Ignorance*, Professor John Burnet described the children aged from seven to twelve as being the most precious capital possessed by any nation, because during those years normal children have the capacity of acquiring and remembering information with ease ; and it is one of the indispensable functions of the teacher to eliminate much academic drudgery in later years by anticipating it with the child's play of earlier years.

I shall have caricatured my intention here if I seem to suggest that boys and girls are so many little sponges, sucking up the information into which they are dipped at school, until they reach saturation point. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* illustrates the horrifying development of which such a thought is capable. I plead rather for the recognition that if modern teaching is to be effective it must be scientific : it must at least include the selection and observation of certain *facts*, the importance of which has long since been authenticated from the wide world of human experience.

## II

In the second place, and much more important, it is the function of the teacher to help the taught to get wisdom, which follows upon knowledge. Education is never encyclopaedic learning. Facts are not ends in themselves but means to the true end of wisdom. They are the straw from which alone the bricks may be made. Thus, more important than the learning of facts is the wisdom which correlates them and so provides a pattern for living and a meaning for life.

More precisely, the wisdom which children should be discovering at school as their abiding possession resolves itself into certain great standards of reference. In the intellectual sphere this is judgment ; in the aesthetic sphere it is taste ; in the moral sphere it is character. Indeed, real education is education in intellectual, aesthetic and moral disinterestedness.

My reason for making so trite an observation about spiritual excellences which have been the spear-head of western culture from Plato to Sir Richard Livingstone is that thinking people are recalling them with a new sense of urgency in this mechanized, 'totalitarian' age. The future of industrial man depends very largely on whether teachers in schools, universities, churches and elsewhere succeed in vindicating and saving something which is now gravely menaced.

Intellectual, aesthetic and moral disinterestedness are the fruits of wisdom and the authentic marks of an educated mind. But in this industrial age which is increasingly dominated by the propaganda technique of wireless, cinema and newspaper, it becomes increasingly difficult for anyone to illustrate in his own personal life this many-sided disinterested-

ss and to have a right judgment in all things. The encroachments of the omni-competent State on personal freedom are now notorious in every so-called civilized country. In time of war, which is now 'total' war, the unique status of the person is necessarily repudiated with cynical thoughtlessness. Nationalism becomes the chief end of man. The parade ground is its symbol, the ant-heap its working model. Right judgments are no more than tiddley-winks for political opportunism to play with. Moreover modern men feel that their personal destiny is taken out of their hands by "an impersonal process which throws them on the street to-day,icks them into the vortex of a vast industrial whirlpool to-morrow, andives them into a war of extinction the day after tomorrow." The criticism of so many adolescent boys and girls is due to this rather than to any other cause. Indeed, Communism and Naziism are striking examples of the modern reaction against mere idealism, that cultured devotion to the ideal, the beautiful and the good, which seems sentimental and unrealistic in the face of the economic facts and social forces which play so determinative a part in the movement of history. The grim fact with which we have to reckon is that judgment, taste and character are formed not so much by the ideals which we urge upon people as by the acts in which they are engaged regularly to engage. Going to church on Sunday will not effect much if the pattern of industrial life throughout the week is incompatible with all that Christian worship means. Indeed, moral uplift is a nauseating irrelevance if the actual forms of social life steadily contradict it.

Constructive answers to this problem must be made in various ways ; by the raising of the school leaving age, by a far greater extension and use of part-time education, and by much more vocational training with the requisite apparatus and practical work, especially for the non-academic type of child who could learn so much from manual work while still at school. All this and much else must be done if the evils of industrialism are to be mitigated, and industrialism itself mastered before it completely masters us. But it is neither prejudice nor special pleading to add that at home, the school and the church are now the last strongholds of the forces of the spirit, and to ask whether the school is not pre-eminently the field where the final battle for the nurture of judgment, taste and character will be decisively fought out.

Sir Richard Livingstone says that ours is an age without standards. Others have announced approvingly that this is the century of the common man. Far be it from me to make a connection between the two statements, between effect and cause. Such slick generalizations illustrate that very degradation of sound judgment which true education alone will cure. I am urging that it is the function of the teacher to impart such knowledge and to evoke such wisdom that children will be able to leave school with standards of reference which no later experiences will be able to annihilate. For example, the study of history—using the term in its widest sense, to include geography, language, literature and the arts—is one great founda-

tion for the things which cannot be shaken. Just as no man who has read Gibbon is likely to be taken in by the third-rate journalism which would pass itself off as history, so the children who have been educated—not only for the school certificate but for the art of living, in terms of great art, great music, great literature and all the tragic heights and depths of the human story whereof these things are the immemorial expression,—such children will have a standard of reference against which the cheap, meretricious and ‘ bogus ’ things will measure themselves and be seen for what they are.

They will have learned from their work in the physics laboratory, for example, that truth is a mistress who disdains a divided allegiance and that the evidence of facts has an intrinsic sanctity which must be revered, regardless of consequences. They will have learned from musical appreciation—through the gramophone record, the wireless programme or, best of all, through interest and participation in an orchestra—the difference between what is great and what is sentimental and insincere in music. They will have learned enough about the grammar of aesthetic, from the informed study of painting and the arts generally, to be able to judge whether the pictures of Greuze and Fragonard are bad art, and whether Giotto and the Battersea power station are good. They will have learned, not from textbooks about great literature or from Verity’s admirable notes on Shakespeare, but from great literature itself, the main principles of literary criticism : knowing, for example why the best critics speak as they do of Hazlitt’s prose and Wordsworth’s sonnets, or why the stanza form of Matthew Arnold’s “ *Thyrsis* ” is one of the glories of English poetry. Learning wisdom from all this and learning from one another in the community life of teacher and taught, as the years pass, they may come at length to ask the ultimate questions and, with the words of the prophets and of the Gospels sounding in their ears, may find themselves trying to make sense of the universe itself by thinking God’s thoughts after Him. These, I believe, are the standards of reference whereby wisdom will be justified of her children.

### III

In the third and most important place, then, the function of the teacher is not only to impart knowledge and to evoke wisdom ; it is also to foster and under-pin (the mixture of metaphors is deliberate) that religious faith without which the wisdom of a Solomon himself is vanity and vexation of spirit. In several unlikely quarters to-day people are discovering again that except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. But what, precisely, does such rhetoric mean ? Does it mean anything that really matters to the teacher of algebra or latin, chemistry or history ? In short, why drag in religion ?

Because a multitude of things could be said here on the relevance of religion, I must be content with saying the one thing which seems to me



be most important. Why is the communication of knowledge an insufficient account of the teacher's function ? Why should not natural science, for example, be the end of education ? The answer is twofold. In the first place, each exact science is an abstraction from the whole content of reality ; physics abstracts its data from the richer content of reality with which biology is concerned ; the biologist abstracts his data from the still richer content of reality with which the psychologist is concerned ; psychology is likewise a strictly empirical science, and the psychologist goes beyond his legitimate function if he claims to answer those ultimate questions which are the concern of metaphysics. In short, the selective character of the sciences is essential to their progress, but it obviously limits their scope. Science is not enough. The reason why theology has been called the queen of the sciences is that the sciences point beyond themselves.

In the second place, scientific knowledge is always a means to some end rather than an end in itself. Apart from the one great value which it recognizes as such—truth—it is not directly concerned with values. It observes what happens but makes no moral or aesthetic judgment thereon. It is neutral in regard to the supreme values on whose very vindication civilization itself depends. It leaves man to decide what he will do with discoveries which are vast in their potentiality for good or evil. The moral aspect of the internal combustion engine, wireless telegraphy or atomic energy is not the concern of the physicist. To quote Julian Huxley : " What man shall do with the new facts, the new ideas, the new opportunities of control which science is showering upon him, does not depend upon science, but upon what man wants to do with them, and this in turn depends upon his scale of values." His scale of values : which is, presumably, what I have been here describing and commending as wisdom. May we not therefore substitute ' wisdom ' for ' science ', as being the ultimate purpose of the teacher ? Why drag in anything more ? Will it not suffice to say that the great cultural values are the end of education ? The answer is ' no ', since that would be to take a sentimentally optimistic view of man, that rosy view of human nature which the facts of human history have belied from the beginning. A fact sufficiently testified by two world wars in one generation is that there is something mysteriously, radically and permanently wrong with man ; what Kant called " radical evil " (*das radikale Böse*), and what St. Paul knew as " the mystery of iniquity." Every child of Adam is strangely corrupted—the weaker word will do—at the centre of his moral being ; that is, in his will. The universality of moral evil is a monument to the tragic fact that man is always, in some sense, unfree. He is not free to choose the good, always and everywhere, and to vindicate those high values which are nevertheless the clue to his origin and destiny. This is the submerged rock on which his utopian idealism in all its many forms is always being shipwrecked.

Ovid's cry, "I see and approve of the better way, but I follow the worse way," is like St. Paul's testimony in Romans vii, "the evil that I would not, that I do." It is fundamental to the spiritual biography of the whole race. "What a piece of work is man; how noble in reason; how infinite in faculties, in form and moving; how express and admirable in action; how like an angel in apprehension; how like a god." Yes. But later on in that same scene Hamlet remarks: "Use every man after his desert, and who shall escape whipping"; and later still: "What should such fellows as I do, crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all."

In short, the dainty aestheticism which talks easily of the great values fails to take a sufficiently tragic view of man, and to realize that for human welfare human nature is not enough. Man is both noble and despicable. He needs something more than intellectual, aesthetic and moral disinterestedness: he needs redemption. Nothing else can meet his case. Unless the mystery of iniquity is somehow met and effectively dealt with by the mystery of divine grace, the most disquieting riddle of human history must remain unsolved.

This fundamental and abiding disharmony in man is man's abiding tragedy. Science is not enough because man is not good enough for science; his blue prints for Utopia always mock him. Humanism is not enough, because man has constantly to discover the truth of Nietzsche's dictum that his culture is ever in danger of destruction by the very instruments of culture. The simple goodness demanded by the moralist is not enough because this too is tainted with human frailty and sin, and is far less disinterested, deep-rooted and reliable than righteous people suppose; at any moment it may reveal its utter inadequacy, and be seen as filthy rags. We refuse this from St. Paul, perhaps, only to find ourselves compelled to accept it from Freud or from any modern realist who, whether he uses the old terminology about original sin or not, will not let us escape the truth about man for which it stood. Is it not one of the profoundest Christian insights into the truth about man's nature that sinners may be nearer to salvation than the 'righteous'? If there was one thing more than another against which Christ steadily warned men, it was the badness of 'goodness'; for that is what the parable of the Pharisee and the publican really means; it is the living nerve of St. Paul's distinctively evangelical contrast between works and grace, between the legalism of self-righteousness and the justification which is by faith alone.

I am not suggesting that it is the function of teachers to preach the mystery of grace to their pupils in so many words, as they fulfil their specialized function at desk, or blackboard, or in the margin of the exercise books of the Lower Fourth. But I do suggest that the best teachers are nevertheless ministers of religion in a sense that is vitally necessary to the nations and to the world. Knowing as I do—we all know it—the frighteningly responsible position which every good teacher holds

in the minds and hearts of the children ; and realizing as I do the profound and silent influence which countless teachers exercise over them long after those children have left school, I make bold to say that the teacher is far more of a theologian than he knows ; and that if he is willing to live reverently in those half-lights which are all that the gigantic paradox of existence really vouchsafes to us, the children will certainly know it, and will themselves confess the same religious faith, however inarticulately, not only on their lips but in their lives.

For me, such religious faith must be Christian. The Christian Gospel is a word from the beyond—from the other side of empirical reality, as it were—uttered with power and great glory in the midst of historic time. Paradox is part of its essential genius, therefore. For here is eternity in the midst of the time-process ; here is revelation which, like Wordsworth's skylark, is " true to the kindred points of heaven and home." Here is judgment and mercy—the wrath of God which is revealed against all unrighteousness, and the redeeming love of God which at the same time goes to the uttermost to save this fallen world. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us in the action and passion of the incarnate Son of God. This is gospel, good news, because it is the only victory known to us which really overcomes the world, and which, so we believe, will be consummated at the last, beyond pain and death and the fashion of this world that passeth away. Response to it is the vocation which illumines and crowns every vocation—notably that of the teacher. Such response is what we mean by faith. And the world urgently needs just such faith, at once universal and authoritative, by which men may live together as men, and as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

*(Dr. J. S. Whale is Head Master of Mill Hill School.)*



## CHILDREN BILL

By JOHN MOSS

SO much has been written about the Report of the Curtis Committee, which has already been considered in two issues of THE FORTNIGHTLY\* that it is unnecessary to refer in detail to the recommendations which the Committee made, but in considering the Children Bill now before Parliament I should like, as a member of that Committee, to express my pleasure that so many of our recommendations have been accepted by the Government and are incorporated in the Bill. Others, such as those relating to the law of adoption, have been noted for consideration in connection with further legislation.

The Curtis Committee was appointed to inquire into the existing methods of providing for children who from loss of parents or from any cause are deprived of a normal home life with their own parents or relatives. The expression "deprived child" has, therefore, been used rather largely in considering the problem. I am glad that in the Bill the children for whom local authorities are to be responsible are described in general language.

The Bill firmly places local responsibility on the councils of counties and county boroughs in England and Wales, and of counties and large burghs in Scotland, for receiving into their care, where it appears to the local authority that their intervention is necessary in the interests of the welfare of the child, any child in their area under the age of seventeen who has no parents or guardians or who has been abandoned or lost, or whose parents or guardians are prevented, for the time being or permanently, by incapacity or any other circumstances from providing for his proper accommodation, maintenance and upbringing. Each local authority must normally appoint a committee for the purpose. This is in accordance with the recommendation of the Curtis Committee but contrary to the views of those who have argued that the responsibility should be placed on the education committee. The local authority, acting through the same committee, will also be responsible for children who, because they are in need of care or protection, or for other reasons, are committed by a court to the care of the authority as a "fit person". This will avoid the present unsatisfactory practice, whereby children coming under the Poor Law Act are dealt with by the public assistance authority—either in children's Homes or by boarding-out—and those coming under the Children and Young Persons Act are dealt with by the Education Committee.

---

\*"*Deprived Children and the Curtis Report.*" By H. C. Dent. December 1946.

"*Some Criticisms of the Curtis Report.*" By Lady Allen of Hurtwood. March 1947.

It is a great step forward for the Bill to make it obligatory on a local authority to act as a "fit person" where the court deems it proper to commit a child, or young person, to the care of the authority. This, however, will put local authorities in a difficult position unless they are allowed to decide whether a child should be boarded-out or accommodated in a residential Home. The Bill places boarding-out as the primary method of providing care for any child for whom a local authority is responsible and only for the maintenance of a child in a Home where this is not practicable or desirable "for the time being". Under the present regulations, the consent of the Secretary of State must be obtained if action other than boarding-out is desired for any child who is committed to the care of the local authority. In the case of children for whom a public assistance authority is responsible, however, it is in the discretion of the authority to decide whether the child should be boarded-out or maintained in a children's Home. It is not always realized that it is by no means easy to board out all children for whom a local authority have to provide care, particularly boys over eleven, and discretion should, therefore, be left with the local authority to do what they think best for any particular child unhampered by detailed regulations of the central department. The juvenile court will, however, be required first to consider any representations which the local authority may wish to make, before committing a child to their care, unless to do so would in the opinion of the court, cause undue delay.

The present procedure whereby a court cannot commit a child to a local authority as a "fit person" without their consent, may sometimes cause a child to be committed to an approved school even although it might have been in the interests of the child to be in a small residential Home possibly followed by being boarded-out at a later stage. The new procedure may, therefore, result in a reduction of the number of children and young persons sent to approved schools.

Although the first emphasis in relation to all children for whom the local authority are responsible is on boarding-out, each local authority will be empowered, like the existing public assistance authority, to provide children's Homes, and will be under obligation to do so as far as required by the Secretary of State. These Homes will include Homes for the temporary reception of children in which there must be the necessary facilities for the observation of the physical and mental condition of the children. They will also be available for use as places of safety, thus avoiding the scandal of remand homes being sometimes used unsuitably for this purpose. The Secretary of State will have power to direct that any unsatisfactory Home shall not be used to accommodate children.

The Caldecott Community, with financial assistance from the Nuffield Foundation, is now running an experimental reception centre in Kent, to which children are being sent as a place of safety together with other children for whom the county council are likely to be responsible for more

than a temporary period. It is hoped that local authorities generally will realize the importance of establishing this type of centre and so avoid the practice which now prevails in too many areas whereby children, on first coming into the care of the local authority, are taken into a public assistance institution. Children found in the reception centre to be normal and healthy can be boarded-out or transferred to a children's Home administered either by the local authority or by a voluntary body.

The Curtis Committee considered that every orphan or deserted child coming within the range of public care should have a legal guardian to take the major decisions in his life and to feel full responsibility for his welfare. The Committee did not, however, favour the assumption of parental rights by a local authority by mere resolution, as can now be done by a public assistance authority, but thought that the matter should be dealt with by extending the provisions of the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1925 and giving jurisdiction to county courts and juvenile courts as well as the High Court. This alteration in the law is to be made but the Bill also provides a rather elaborate procedure whereby a local authority can assume parental rights in the case of a child in their care by resolution which may have to be confirmed by the court. This procedure applies where the child has no parent or guardian or has been abandoned by his parent or guardian, or if he has a parent or guardian who is incapable of caring for him by reason of some permanent disability, or is of such habits or mode of life as to be unfit to have the care of him. If objection is raised by the parent, the decision of the authority must be confirmed by a juvenile court.

These provisions are rather similar to the existing procedure under the Poor Law Act and if the recommendation of the Curtis Committee in this respect is not to be accepted it is clearly desirable that some such power should be provided to deal with children of unsatisfactory parents, but it is, to me, very questionable whether it is necessary or desirable for a local authority to have these powers in relation to orphan children. I think it would be preferable that in all such cases action should be taken under the Guardianship of Infants Act even if the local authority, pending the appointment of some other suitable person, sought to be appointed as guardian. Some public assistance authorities have almost as a matter of routine passed such resolutions in respect of orphan and deserted children. I think this is wrong. The child knows then or later that he or she has been "adopted" by the local authority. In the past such a child, and particularly a girl, has sometimes considered herself a "pauper child". Even under the new law, such a child may still often consider himself to be a "local authority child". I doubt the necessity for this provision in the Bill but if it is in the Act, I hope local authorities will only use the powers in cases of real necessity.

I think there are many children in voluntary Homes who would benefit by having someone legally empowered to take an interest in them. Action



ould then be taken under the Guardianship of Infants Act but it would be helpful if the children's officer might have the opportunity of suggesting in consultation with those responsible for the Home that application should be made to the court for the appointment of a guardian for any particular child in the home.

The duty of a local authority to receive a child in their care will normally continue as long as he is under the age of eighteen and his welfare appears to them to require it. This is in accordance with the recommendation of the Curtis Committee but in my view more harm than good will result if the officer of the local authority who exercises this care is not extremely careful and discreet. If, for instance, a girl has started as an apprentice in a shop or a clerk in an office and is living in a hostel she may not want it to be generally known that she is under the supervision of the local authority. It is right that some supervision should be available to guard against the possibility of the girl getting into difficulty or misbehaving herself. She should have someone to turn to for friendly guidance. This will be one of the responsibilities of the children's officer. Although, at any rate in a large county, most of her contacts with the children will probably of necessity be through members of her staff, it is to be hoped that the children's officer will herself maintain this particular contact which can better be arranged by occasional visits of the girl to the office or even the officer's home than by the officer visiting the hostel or place of business which might often be most inadvisable.

One of the major recommendations of the Curtis Committee was for the appointment of a children's officer by each local authority or by a combination of authorities. The Committee thought that it might be found that the majority of persons suitable for the work are women, but did not exclude men from these posts. The children's officer should be mainly concerned with the supervision of children for whom the authority are responsible and the visitation of voluntary Homes. In these circumstances it may generally be found that a woman is more suitable, but if, as I hope will not be the case, the children's officer has to be concerned with a considerable amount of administrative work, and office routine, then I think a man would often be equally suitable, but it would be necessary to have a woman in a senior capacity who would be responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the children. I am therefore inferring that a woman would be the children's officer on the assumption that her duties will be confined almost entirely to the actual supervision and care of children and that she will not be required to undertake much routine administrative work.

Turning now to the central control to be exercised by the Secretary of State it may be noted that he is to have very considerable powers over both local authorities and voluntary bodies. It was not within the terms of reference of the Curtis Committee to name the government department in which central responsibility for the new service should rest, so the Com-

mittee could merely recommend that responsibility at departmental level should be in one department. If the Committee had been asked to suggest a department, I am sure the majority—but perhaps not all the members—would have suggested the Home Office. This view has been taken by the Government. Local authorities will, however, probably consider that the Secretary of State proposes to extend his general supervision—which is admittedly necessary—to too much detail. In the past the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State have been empowered to make boarding-out rules which are obligatory on local authorities. Such rules have, however, not been obligatory on voluntary bodies and it is satisfactory that in future the rules of the central department will also apply to children boarded-out by voluntary bodies.

The Minister of Health has also been empowered to make general regulations as to the conduct of children's Homes administered by public assistance authorities. The Secretary of State will have similar powers and these powers will also extend to voluntary Homes. All voluntary Homes must be registered by the Secretary of State and he will be able to refuse to register any Home which he considers to be unsatisfactory, or to remove an unsatisfactory Home from the register. These Homes will, as at present, be open to inspection by the Home Office but also, by the local authority for the area in which the Home is situated.

The Secretary of State will be responsible to Parliament for the general supervision of the new service and in view of the fact that there will be an Exchequer grant of fifty per cent. of the expenditure incurred by local authorities in discharging their functions under the Act, they cannot grumble if there is rather close departmental supervision. It does, however, seem reasonable that a major authority, such as a county council or a county borough council, should be considered competent to appoint a person to take charge of a children's Home which, although a very important post, is no more important than many other appointments which the authority have to make. The approval of the Secretary of State is, however, to be obtained to such an appointment except in the cases, if any, in which the regulations dispense with his approval by reason that the person to be appointed possesses such qualifications as may be prescribed by the regulations. It may be a long time before there is a sufficient number of persons suitably qualified in the technical sense for this work and surely in the meantime the authorities ought to be trusted to make the appointments. There are other instances in the Bill where the somewhat detailed control to be exercised by the Secretary of State will probably be considered objectionable by local authorities.

What of the future? Will the safeguards provided in the Bill prevent a recurrence of the O'Neill tragedy? Will they result in the children for whom local authorities are responsible getting a better prospect in life? Will there be the necessary improvement in the care of children in some voluntary Homes? Finance comes into the question in so far as voluntary

ganizations and particularly small organizations are concerned, and in this respect I think it may be assumed that increasing financial support will have to be given to the smaller Homes by the local authorities which could of course only be done if their Homes are run on sound lines. I think the general answer to these questions is 'yes' but it will not happen at once. Administration is more important than legislation. There must be legislation but good legislation in all aspects of social welfare can be stultified by bad administration or lack of vision. It will be the duty of the Secretary of State to stimulate local authorities and voluntary bodies. Some Homes administered by both types of organization were found by the Curtis Committee to be a disgrace to the community. The Secretary of State will have to be firm about these and later even indifferent Homes must be closed, but a reasonable opportunity must be given for their improvement. The Home Office inspectorate must be increased but the inspectors—like the children's officers appointed by local authorities—must be persons of sound common sense and although they should be trained academically in child care, this should not be their sole qualification. The members of the Curtis Committee worked hard and spared no effort to get a true picture of the present position, both by touring the country and receiving evidence. Every individual or body which desired to give evidence was invited to do so. The report of the Committee except on one point was unanimous. This unanimity is probably the reason why their recommendations have been so largely adopted. I think that their labours were worth while and that good will result.

The main improvement in child care can, however, only be brought about by an improvement in the care of children in their own homes by their own parents. Much good work in this connection can be done by welfare officers of the local health authorities who will be responsible for the new health services and of voluntary bodies. Organizations such as the N.S.P.C.C. can also help if they appoint more women welfare officers on their staffs; improved housing conditions will also greatly assist. But I do hope that the younger generation now growing up will, through the schools and youth organizations—not excluding those attached to religious bodies—and living in better social conditions than their parents, realize the responsibility of parenthood and so prevent their children coming within the class which was described by the Curtis Committee as being "deprived of a normal home life"? I hope so.

*Mr. John Moss, C.B.E., is a Barrister and the Public Assistance Officer for Kent.)*



## COVENTRY PATMORE AND ROBERT BRIDGES

Some letters

BY DEREK PATMORE

COVENTRY Patmore was introduced to Robert Bridges by their mutual friend, Gerard Manley Hopkins. Hopkins had shown Patmore Robert Bridges' poem "Prometheus The Firegiver" and when Bridges heard that Patmore admired his work, they entered into a long correspondence which developed into a friendship. The three poets were drawn together by their intense interest in new technical verse forms, and both Hopkins and Bridges admired the older man for his essay on metrical law printed as a preface to his poem "Amelia" in 1878 and for his experiments in *The Unknown Eros* which had been published in 1877. Moreover Patmore was drawn to Bridges as he knew that the latter was the intimate friend of Hopkins who, at this period, was still an unknown poet.

The letters from Robert Bridges are mostly published for the first time\* and are extremely rare as Robert Bridges destroyed most of his correspondence before his death. This group of letters escaped destruction because they remained amongst Coventry Patmore's papers. At the time of the correspondence, Robert Bridges was still a struggling poet. He was forced to publish his poems at his own expense and had few admirers. The letters show what a difficult time the future Poet Laureate was experiencing.

The correspondence opens with a letter dated August 22, 1883, in which Bridges says he is sending Patmore his poems at the request of their mutual friend, Gerard Manley Hopkins :

Yattendon, Nr. Newbury.

Dear Sir,

I have great pleasure in sending you, at the request of my friend Fr. Gerard Hopkins, two small pamphlets of poetry. He tells me that he has interested you in them and that you wish to see them. I am afraid that you will be very much disappointed if he has at all raised your expectations, but I hope that you will not let your kindness do any violence to your judgement.

I should like to say that the sonnets are part of a poem called the Growth of Love, which I once published an outline of. I hope some day to put them all together.

I hope that my title of "new prosody" will not offend you. You will more easily see what it is by what I have written in it than I could explain in few words—the foundation of it is natural stress,—such as we find in Shakespeare's works—

---

\*by permission of Mr. Kenneth Sisam, executor of the Robert Bridges' estate. A number of these letters are also being included in my book *The Life and Times of Coventry Patmore* to be published by Constable.

with attention to quantity, i.e. not to use unaccented long syllables as if they were short syllables,—and not to admit any conventional accents. The result of attention to such a method is, as you will well know, quite an infinite liberty and variety of rhythm. For when once the reader is assured that the grammatical stress is the metrical accent, his ear will receive whatever rhythm is presented to it without difficulty.

Gerard Hopkins tells me that he is sending you a copy of my “Prometheus the Firegiver”. There is some choice writing in that of this kind.

Begging that you will excuse my writing such a preface,

I am yours faithfully,

ROBERT BRIDGES.

In reply to a letter from Patmore, Bridges writes again on August 29, 1883 :

Yattendon, Nr. Newbury.

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and present.\*

I should not have written anything to you on the subject of prosody without mentioning your essay, which, of course, I know very well. I did not mention it from unwillingness to open so difficult a subject—and I hope this will serve me in your judgement as sufficient reason for saying nothing now.

As far as I can see we agree in what we arrive at ; but I should be impatient of your path.

It would be very agreeable, and to me instructive, to talk the subject over together and, if it is not taking too great a liberty, may I hope that you will some day seize an occasion for paying me a visit. I am within easy reach of London and Oxford, and live in a very secluded and pretty county, which, if you do not know it, it would delight you to see. I am nearly always at home and would meet any train you might choose to come by.

You speak too kindly of my poems. It is a pleasure to me to know that they have been in a poet's hands. Pray do not consider me responsible for the exact form of their “get up”. This must handicap them severely to sensible people, but I do not think that many sensible people read poetry nowadays, and I cannot blame them.

Among other attractions here I have I think a perfect collection of Gerard Hopkins' somewhat peculiar but very beautiful verse. You would like to see this if you do not know it. He is of course the “friend” alluded to in one of my prefaces.

With many thanks for your kindness, believe me,

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BRIDGES.

Two months later Bridges writes again about another poet, Canon Dixon, whose poem “Mano” he is anxious that Patmore should read :

Yattendon, Nr. Newbury.

Dear Sir,

I am sorry that Mano is unknown to booksellers, but it gives me the pleasure of sending you a copy in which I have taken the liberty of writing your name. You will regret the uneven workmanship and some lesser matters as much as I do, but will no doubt also find as much genuine delight in the poem as I have done. There are many things in it which seem to me first rate in the very best manner : touches which none but a master can give.

I am extremely obliged to you for thinking of my proposition concerning the new

\*Coventry Patmore had sent Bridges his own poems.

prosody. As you say it will be necessary to talk it over, and I am as impatient of writing as you are (I have been much quieted by your letter, having been somewhat uneasy on your behalf previous, which you will understand : and I should be very sorry to think that you would consent to drudge thro' another essay on prosody)—And then if you think it worth your criticism I think you will like to say something about it. The fact is that the theory which Hopkins and I propose is simpler than any other—as I think I said before, too simple for people to see.

I will try and get on with my copy of Hopkins' poems, and will then send you an instalment.

I believe a bookseller at Oxford named Gee has some few copies of my *Prometheus*, but they cost 10/- each, a ridiculous price. I shall be happy to give you a copy whenever it shall be reprinted. My reason for publishing in the manner I did was simply that Mr. Daniel asked me to give him something to print in his private press (which he works entirely with his own hands). So I sent him *Prometheus*, he sells 100 copies at 10/- each by subscription £50 and has few expenses. His friends and others buy his books for the sake of qualities which they discern in the printing ; besides which his books are thought to be good commercial speculations by bibliophiles. Now if I print in London it costs me money, and little comes of it. Since I never sold 25 copies of my last pamphlet, the Gosses and such people damn me with their foolish praise, which the public will not swallow and they know very well how to do it. I am therefore 'unknown to booksellers' which however does not distress me. If I could find a world where the reviewers could not come I should get on well enough—No doubt your experience is the same.

Believe me, Yours very truly,  
ROBERT BRIDGES.

During the next year, Patmore writes to thank Bridges for the copy of "*Prometheus*" and discusses the proposed visit which he hopes to make to see him :

Hastings, May 2, 1884.

Dear Mr. Bridges,

I beg heartily to congratulate you on the news you tell me of. Some day in the summer I expect to be able to arrange a visit to Oxford and Cambridge in company with Basil Champneys, whom I believe you know ; and you will perhaps then be able to give me the double pleasure of making your acquaintance and that of your wife that will be. I am very glad to find that my feeling about my son's verses is supported by your opinion, to which, as I told Mr. Hopkins, I attach so much weight that I hesitate to give so absolute a verdict of dissent from some of his (Hopkins') poetical novelties as I otherwise should give. To me his poetry has the effect of veins of pure gold imbedded in masses of unpracticable quartz. He assures me that\* his "thoughts involuntary moved" in such numbers, and that he did not write them from preconceived theories. I cannot understand it. His genius is however unmistakable, and is lovely and unique in its effects whenever he approximates to the ordinary rules of composition.

Yours very truly,  
COVENTRY PATMORE.

Hastings, May 7, 1884.

My dear Sir,

I thank you very much for "*Prometheus*". I have already read it two or three times, having bought a copy from Mr. Gee soon after it came out. My future readings of it will be all the pleasanter for being out of your presentation copy, and I shall

---

\*Here Patmore is quoting Hopkins' own words about his poetry.



take care that my other copy finds a place in some worthy library. I do not like to tell you how thoroughly I like the poem. If you wish to know, you can ask one or two of our common acquaintances. I wish either to be silent or to say the truth ; and silence would have implied more difference than I felt.

I have seldom felt so much attracted towards any man as I have been towards him (Hopkins) and I shall be more sorry than I can say if my criticisms have hurt him.

Yours very truly,

COVENTRY PATMORE.

Towards the end of the year Bridges writes to thank Patmore for the efforts which he is making to get Bridges' work more known to the public, or Patmore had asked Greenwood, the editor of the *St. James's Gazette*, to review Bridges' poem "Prometheus" :

Yattendon, Chieveley.

My dear Patmore,

It is very kind of you indeed to have taken the trouble to bring Mr. Greenwood to task for his rhyming review, and kinder still to undertake to review poor old Prometheus. As for the review I thought it most flattering, the little praise the rhymster gave me was sufficient impertinence perhaps to be unpleasant ; but more notice, and he could scarcely have given less, would have been damning.

You ask when Psyche will be out, she is only 4 or 5 months old yet and I shall keep her a little longer till I can look over her with a fresh eye. Meanwhile too she is visiting among friends and being subjected to such a Bentley-izing as I can command.

Nero however is in the press and should have been out by this time. When that is printed I will send it to you and if it should suit you as well to review that with Prometheus it would suit me better. This you shall decide when you have seen it. If not, wait for Psyche, only I shall not be able to print Psyche at all if Prometheus does not sell. Bell is publishing that at his own risk, and would do business with me if the book sold. If it does not, I cannot afford a publisher's bill. If I have any hope with the public it is by getting really on the stage, and I have ventured £15 in printing Nero in the hope that good judges will after reading it be of opinion that I can write for the stage. I do not think Nero would have any chance of being acted now—as it wants too many actors and the chief part is a woman's. (Which could be acted by a man, but present convention forbids that) but I could then print a romantic drama which I think would suit pretty well.

All this to inform you of the present state and prospects of Psyche. If Prometheus sells I will get Psyche out by next Easter. I should not be able to read the poem again before then.

I am now drawing towards the end of "the return of Ulysses" which I have found a splendid subject (dramatic) but sadly hampered by duties to Homer. Such duties however are very pleasant though they cause delay and difficulties.

With very many thanks for your great kindness and kindest remembrances to Mrs. and the Misses Patmore, believe me

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BRIDGES.

It was reviewed in last Academy of Mackail—I have not yet seen it. Lang is going to review it in Harper.

Patmore seems to have been very energetic on behalf of his new friend, or Bridges writes again on January 2, 1885 :

Yattendon, Newbury.

My dear Patmore,

Thank you very much for sending the *St. James'* with your article on Eros & P.

It was extremely kind of you to take all that trouble and it gave me great pleasure to read the praise you bestowed on the poem, knowing from whom it came. I was of course most interested by what you said of the intense and the tense. The tense seems a good expression. As for the intense perhaps I am incapable of it. There was not a fit place for it in Psyche that I could see without straining the whole story and therewith the allegory, but I condemn myself on this head, as you do, for where I have used pathos it has generally been with some conceit of thought. However, I hope my drama will show a nearer approach to the right thing, at least here and there. But a reviewer in the Athenaeum was severe on me in this respect with regard to Prometheus saying the scene between Prometheus and Argeia was deadly cold: where the mother runs back and embraces her child in fright, and Inachus goes on getting the grim story out of Prometheus. And then I thought that the ode, "O my vague desires" was intense. Do not think that I am finding fault with your remarks, for I am most grateful for this criticism, and will try and profit by it. But to be intense in a drama all the actor wants is the right word in the right place, more must hamper him.

I think that you are far too kind to my poem the chief merit of which I should say consisted in the manner in which I have amended Apuleius without altering him. I do not think that any one now translating Apuleius with my version before him could refuse to follow my steps. I mean in such matters as the conduct of Psyche where her trials are offered to her. Her motive for insisting on the admission of her sisters, etc.

However we must be both tired of the subject. With best wishes for the New Year and many thanks, believe me

Yours very truly,  
ROBERT BRIDGES.

P.S.—Should you by chance meet with anyone who might expect me to send him a copy of E & P you would oblige me by spreading the story of its publication, that is, published at the expense of some friends and that I have had no copies to give away.

and again on March 18, 1885 :

Yattendon.

My dear Patmore,

You will want to know how much pleased I was with your article in the St. James', and I should have written at once but the review came the day after I had written you a letter. Lang sent it to me first with pencilled ecstasies on the margin, and told me that I ought to be pleased.

A contributor to the St. James' being asked in the Savile Club if he had written it said "No, I wish I had". Of course I think that it was too good: and I should have been ashamed of such praise from a friend whose friendship had not sprung from literary sympathy. I know how much the comparison with Barnes\* means from you, though others will not understand it perhaps as well. But I was glad that you took the opportunity of saying a word for him.

Beyond my thanks I have nothing to say today. I told you that I was going to send Psyche to press. I am engaged in giving her a worse correction than ever Aphrodite did.

When Prometheus came out at Bell's he sent a copy to a customer of his named or pseudonymmed Michael Field. Whereupon MF sent me a ridiculous letter of opinion on myself. I replied somewhat curtly, and thinking perhaps I might have offended the unknown one I told Bumpus to send him or her one of the illprinted Neroes. Whereupon I have received the most impertinent letter I ever had in my life. I would have sent it on to you but unfortunately I threw it on the fire. He or she told me amongst other things that I had no form in the delineation of character,

---

\*William Barnes, the Dorset poet whom Coventry Patmore admired greatly.

should not choose Roman themes, should take some old forgotten Greek subject, should etc., etc. . . . and all in the most hideous handwriting I ever saw. Who is it ?

With kindest regards to your family,

Yours very truly,  
ROBERT BRIDGES.

Meanwhile in 1889 their mutual friend Gerard Manley Hopkins died and Patmore wrote the following letter to Bridges on August 12, 1889.

Hastings.

My dear Bridges,

I can well understand how terrible a loss you have suffered in the death of Gerard Hopkins—you who saw so much more of him than I did. I spent three days with him at Stonyhurst and he stayed a week with me here ; and that, with the exception of a somewhat abundant correspondence by letter, is all the communication I had with him ; but this was enough to awaken in me a reverence and affection, and like of which I have never felt for any other man but one, that one being Frederick Greenwood, who for more than a quarter of a century has been the sole true and heroic politician and journalist in our degraded land. Gerard Hopkins was the only orthodox, and as far as I could see, saintly man in whom religion had absolutely no narrowing effect upon his general opinions and sympathies. A Catholic of the most scrupulous strictness, he could nevertheless see the Holy Spirit in all goodness, truth and beauty ; and there was something in all his words and manners which were at once a rebuke and an attraction to all who could only aspire to be like him. The authority of his goodness was so great with me that I threw the manuscript of a little book—a sort of “*Religio Poetae*”<sup>\*</sup>—into the fire, simply because, when he had read it he said with a grave look, “*That’s telling secrets.*” This little book had been the work of ten years’ continual meditations, and could not but have made a greater effect than all the rest I have ever written ; but his doubt was final with me.

I am very glad to know that you are to write a memorial of him. It is quite right that it should be privately printed. I, as one of his friends, should protest against any attempt to share him with the public, to whom little of what was most truly characteristic in him could be communicated.

Yours very truly,  
COVENTRY PATMORE.

and again on August 16, 1890 :

Hastings.

My dear Bridges,

Thank you for confiding to me your reasons for not writing the memorial—at least yet. Should you ever do so, I have a considerable number of letters, which you might possibly like to see, and which would be at your service. I should much like to talk this and other matters over with you ; if you would like it, I would try to make a night or two at Yattendon, if it fits in with a visit which I shall be paying with a friend near Oxford in the course of this autumn. The coincidences pointed out in your note are very remarkable ; but I should hesitate before I concluded from them that Calderon had seen the “*Tempest*”. Did dates justify the suspicion ? I should rather have suspected that Shakespeare had read Calderon.\* These fancies of the “*Tempest*” seem to me to savour more of the latter than the former.

Yours very truly,  
COVENTRY PATMORE.

<sup>\*</sup>*Sponsa Dei.*

<sup>\*</sup>Impossible. Shakespeare died when Calderon was sixteen years old.



In 1891 Coventry Patmore was forced to leave Hastings and moved to a new house, The Lodge, Lymington, where he remained till his death and on October 2, 1891, he writes to his friend :

Lymington.

My dear Bridges,

We like the new home better and better every day. I have never seen a better planned or more characteristic house. It is a good size—some 33 rooms—about four times as large as we *want*—but somehow we have swelled our five selves out so as to fill it all—that is to say, to have an appointed use for every part. You need never fear that there may not be a spare room for you. We have a lovely wild garden of about 3 acres, and the views from the windows are more like the shores of Maggiore or Lucerne than anything else I have seen in England.

Yours very truly,

COVENTRY PATMORE.

and again on November 23, 1892 :

Lymington, Hants.

My dear Bridges,

I congratulate you—though late—on the birth of your son, which I had not heard of. I lead a hermit's life here, as I have done always, and am not in the way of hearing anything. I take in the "Morning Post", indeed, but only because my servants complain, if I take no paper in, that they cannot light the fires. I never read it. This place suits me in every way better than Hastings. No country I have ever seen in England or elsewhere is, to my mind, to be compared to the New Forest. I am very much of your opinion about —.\* His is a high mediocrity—just the thing to make a great reputation. I suppose that he is the most likely Laureate. Gladstone, of whom a certain poet of your nation has said, "His leprosy's so perfect that men call him clean"† admires him greatly. Best regards to Mrs. Bridges.

Yours truly,

COVENTRY PATMORE.

During August 1894 Bridges came to stay with Patmore and after the visit writes the following letter on October 30, 1894 :

Yattendon House, Newbury.

My dear Patmore,

We got home safely yesterday afternoon, both of us much the better for our pleasant visit to you. I read the Essays in the train, and certainly find them, the best of them, and still more the best parts of them, to sustain your very high praise.\* They seem to me to spring more from a poetic than a critical nature. The happiest bit in them are inspired by strong feeling. There is nothing probably which Mrs. M. would hate more than sham love poetry, and so the passage which perhaps altogether pleased me the best was that in which the rondeliers were likened to the monks who wear their brothers' cast off habits. I like all the *Innocence and Experience* Essay finding it full of new truth (to me) or suggestion. But where she says, in it, parenthetically, that we do not order even our most ordinary affairs by the light of others' experience, I wonder whether this unusual slip is due to her inelastic form of sentence or to her living so entirely *indoors* of herself, so to speak : I mean in her own house of life. The subject of Art seems to draw her outside : e.g. The Essay on *Pathos*, the sentiment of which is true ; but the one on *Penultimate Caricature* (an affected title

\*Name obliterated in Patmore's letter. He was probably referring to Austin Dobson who became Poet Laureate after Tennyson's death.

†Quoted from "The Merry Murder", a poem by Patmore published in *The Unknown Eros*.

in which the same questions are approached, is written inside of herself, and in my judgment contradicts the Essay on *Pathos*, and really wrongs both Leech and Keane, so coarse as K was. It is getting rather near to the potboilers that you spoke of.

Some of her picturesqueness seems won by a boldness of direct metaphor, which compels a peculiar onesided view of the subject—as in *The Narrow House* where the truths shown are much simpler than their expression, and the spirituality and poetry of life is powerfully exhibited by this at the cost of a good deal of obscuring of the facts. This obscurity is due to the metaphor.

The style is very fine, but inelastic. The simple sentences so resent even the short parenthesis which she occasionally ventures, that after one of these had been introduced into their midst, they refuse to go on; like an illtempered man who has been rudely interrupted. Then their extremely precise attitude is suitable to very few sorts of utterance, and needs even more "rejection" of things that might be said, than she has always practised, e.g., at the end of the *Lowell* Essay "I have no commands for futurity" is an admirable confession, but out of balance with the sentiment, which is a confession of either indolence in forming a judgment, or a worse uncertainty.

After I got home I took down *The Unknown Eros*, and read about half of it again, and I wondered again, since you can write such poetry as this is in the best of these Odes, how you could interest yourself in my humble performances. Certainly your great power makes your praise of my work the best thing which I ever had, or am likely to have in that kind. It struck me when I was with you, that you thought that I was indifferent to the poetry of your Unknown Eros. The only point on which I could be is that it makes me rather sad, and for this reason, as well as for the real temptation which familiarity might bring with it to imitate, I have not made such close friends with it as I should have done had I been younger or a layman. I should never hope to write anything so beautiful as, say, the end of *Wind and Wave*, and when I read it last night it recurred as familiarly to me as a beauty of Shakespeare or Milton; but I do not wish to be tempted to imitate.

The sadness which I speak of comes to me as a general impression from reading, and is I think much increased by the effect which the metre gives of the verse attending on the thought, and having no independent aim of its own, as if poetry renounced all its aims to listen for awhile and reflect, and where the thought is sad this abnegation adds beauty to it.

I think the principle is a true one, and I like the verse. You must have been pleased with Mrs. M's Essay on the Odes. I agreed with it except of course about the prosody . . . Thank you very much for your warm friendship, which you have allowed me to see, and which I feel very deeply—and all the more because I move about in a world (sic) unrealised and consider my own little artistic efforts as almost worse than nothing. Perhaps it is the providential final cause of Reviewers and such worldlings to encourage one into a contrarious mood of self conceit so that one may keep active. According to promise I tell Bell to send you the last edition of my lyrics, in which you will find the new ones, and among them a verse here and there which will please you; but you must really understand that I am loth to trouble you with them, and I do not consider them for their own sake worthy of your acceptance.

With kindest regards to Mrs. & Miss Patmore, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BRIDGES.

hope Mrs. Patmore's neuralgia has quite passed off and is flourishing.

---

\*Coventry Patmore had given Bridges a copy of Alice Meynell's essays.

And the two poets continue to correspond until Coventry Patmore's death in 1896 and Patmore writes two more letters to Bridges on May 1, 1895, and May 30 :

Lymington.

My dear Bridges,

I am reading with great pleasure and admiration your book on Keats. Nothing can surpass the artistic quality of Keats, at his best ; but I am perpetually reminded, in *Endymion* and *Hyperion*, that he is writing about things he does not understand. No man can be fit to write such psychological parables as Keats attempts till he is past forty and has devoted many and many years to contemplation of his own soul and its relations. . . .

Yours ever,

COVENTRY PATMORE.

Lymington, Hants.

My dear Bridges,

I read your book on Keats with great attention, pleasure and admiration, except in a few parts in which I thought you give him too high a place among the great poets, and did not sufficiently dwell upon the predominance of the emotional character in his poetry. He is full to overflow with fine imagery, yet he seems to me to be greatly deficient in first-rate imaginative powers. Some of the greatest imaginative poems of the world have been almost totally free from imagery. This is the highest test of great imagination.

Yours ever truly,

COVENTRY PATMORE.

### THREE WOMEN

BY GEOFFREY JOHNSON

#### I

A CHILD, wood-carving with a pocket-knife,  
 Would carve no sharper face. Yet porcelain best  
 Conveys her hard and brittle hold on life,  
 Which, knocked, would perish, but is spared the test.  
 The Viking flicker in her Northumbrian frame,  
 The ruinous lamp which cannot snuffle out  
 Lives but to mock her fireless hearth, her shame  
 Of being suffered till her final bout.  
 At eighty or more, she creeps from dawn to dusk  
 Under the tongue's lash of her favourite daughter.  
 What stings ironic make her gullet husk  
 That must be glad of mercy's milk and water.  
 A stick-propped pottering to the sunset-tree  
 Rounds off her day, her world. "My man is gone,"  
 She weeps, 'and since, there's none to cosset me'—



Although she nagged him to oblivion  
 Before his time. . . . Restrain your pity : this  
 For a heart so self-enclosed is Nemesis.

## II

Niobe's tears and Juno's brooding vapours  
 Comprise her daughter's day at fifty-two ;  
 Add climacteric Ariadne's capers  
 Round the big pronoun I : the blend will do.  
 Her man, she storms, must work and live from home ;  
 Instead of love, this death's head. Oh ! she bears  
 Alone the burden of the world ; not Rome  
 At her last stand knew more sublime despairs—  
 Pardon the piled hyperbole : her talk  
 And looks of trampled dignities are so ;  
 Her nerves are wrecked, she feels too ill to walk,  
 Yet her words pour in cataracting flow.  
 And the main theme's the same : her only child,  
 Whom she spoiled from the cradle, spurns her moan ;  
 Her self projected cuts her like a wild  
 Rebounding missile to the very bone  
 Of self-esteem. . . . But spare your pity : this  
 Is one more sure recoil of Nemesis.

## III

And last, her darling heartbreak, proud and pale,  
 The brainless butterfly of twenty-four,  
 The scent-moth's lure to the nocturnal male,  
 The cold hawk's beauty with the preying soar.  
 With toss of head and sexual flaunt of hips  
 She takes the morning, and at midnight's hour  
 Rouses both women through thunder and eclipse  
 To feel the dereliction of their power.  
 Too feline to be Magdalen, too hard  
 To give herself in love, she rails to bed,  
 Implying what disastrous hags have marred  
 Forever her dreams of being richly wed.  
 She never will be old as these are old,  
 And when they weakly rise to parry a thrust,  
 Her neutral-vowelled tone correct and cold  
 Flays them at will and rubs them in the dust.  
 She laughs. . . . but spare your anger : Nemesis  
 Will hurl reverberations too from this.

## ELIOT HOWARD

By JOHN BUXTON

AT the turn of the century the preoccupation of the older naturalists with the cataloguing of species, with their affinities and distribution, gave place to the study of the behaviour of the individual animal. In this country it was inevitable that the class of animals whose behaviour would be most closely studied would be the birds, for, apart from all questions of charm and interest, they are much the easiest class to watch. Most of them are diurnal, and are easily recognizable both by sight and sound ; and many of them live close to man, about his buildings, in his gardens, by small pools and streams where he may frequently pass. Also, though this is a little to anticipate, individual birds may usually be found day after day in the same spot, so that the observer may know that he is in fact studying the same bird, or the same colony of birds.

Among the pioneers of this study of bird behaviour two names stand out, those of Edmund Selous and Eliot Howard. It is probable that to that mythical monster ' the general reader ' Selous's name will be better known than Howard's. This is partly due to Howard's taste for publishing his work in handsome and expensive editions not easily to be obtained ; perhaps also to the austerity of their titles, and to the fastidious involutions of a style which makes no concession to the reader's natural wish for occasional relaxation. His books are, indeed, something quite new, and as yet unique, in the literature of natural history ; and such ancestry as they have must be sought in *The Origin of Species* or *The Descent of Man* rather than elsewhere.

For Eliot Howard's concern was not, first and foremost to give pleasure to the reader, nor even to present a careful record of fact, but rather to bring understanding. He was not himself content merely to delight in watching the ways of birds (though that delight he assuredly knew to the full) ; he observed their smallest occasions with scrupulous care, and in the end, being truly a natural philosopher, he built up a consistent, logical scheme of the nature of a bird's world. In other words he wished to understand what sort of life a bird would perceive itself to be living, supposing that, without altering that life, it could be endowed with a man's powers of reflection and interpretation. He might have said, with Robert Bridges, that a bird was

The alphabet of a god's idea, and I  
Who master it, I am the only bird.

or he sought consistently and untiringly to project his mind into the mind of the bird so that, in recording how birds behaved he might perhaps come to some knowledge of why they behaved so. To this purpose he dedicated the leisure hours of a life occupied in business, and in his books as nowhere else is to be found a picture of the mental life of birds—rather, of some birds, for Eliot Howard would never have made so much a generalization as to claim that what he had learnt applied more widely than among those birds from which he learnt.

It will be seen from this brief summary that the reader of Eliot Howard's books must bring to them both a concentrated attention to detail and an imaginative grasp of principle which are perhaps less often given to the reading of "nature books" than to the study of metaphysics. But whoever cares for the study of birds will read and re-read these books with ever increasing admiration for the patience and perspicacity of their author, and, besides, for the profound concentration in the style which, however difficult it may sometimes be, has an inevitable rightness about it wholly in keeping with the matter. And here and there, more frequently in some books than in others, the style is illumined by the author's delight in watching what he so carefully describes, before he returns to the deeper obscurity of speculation.

The first and most sumptuous of his books, *The British Warblers*, was published in parts (in accordance with an old tradition) at intervals from 1907 to 1910. These were illustrated with fine coloured plates which, in keeping with the originality of the work, were supplemented by drawings of warblers in characteristic attitudes or in display. Howard wished to show not only what the birds looked like, but what they did; and this first book, comprehensive as it is in the manner of earlier monographs, yet differs from them in the attention given to the behaviour of these warblers, at least to those which Howard himself had been able to study. The pioneer quality of his work is shown in the scanty information on this subject which was available for species unknown to him personally. There was no other work to draw on, and for many of the species mentioned there is still no adequate account.

Twenty-six species\* are dealt with in this work, and of the twelve which regularly breed in Britain more or less detailed accounts are given. It is perhaps characteristic of the author that he devotes much more space to three species which are especially difficult to watch—reed warbler, marsh warbler and grasshopper warbler—than to those which frequent almost every hedgerow and garden, and can be watched with ease. And it was in his account of these three species, and especially of the first two, that he

---

This number has now been swelled by the splitters, and also by the subsequent records of twelve more vagrant species, to no less than forty-two. The inventions of the taxonomists, being only dubiously discoverable by the eye of faith amid dusty skins of museums, are of little interest to the naturalist; but among the recently added vagrants are Eversmann's warbler (mentioned by Howard in the errata as the correct determination of a supposed greenish warbler on Suleskerry), and the moustach-warbler of which, to the astonishment of all naturalists, a pair bred in England in 1946.



set forth the theory of the significance of territory in the life of a bird which will ever be associated with his name, and which has provided at once a principal stimulus to the study of bird behaviour and a most valuable aid to its interpretation.

In writing of the reed warbler Howard admits the great difficulty he found in studying the habits of a bird that lives, during the months it spends in Britain, in dense beds of reed, and he doubts whether he would have recognized any law of territory had he not been already aware of its existence among many other species. This is not the place to enter into a lengthy discussion of territory, or to describe those modifications which more recent criticism has made to the original theory. All these have tended rather to amplify than to detract from Howard's statement of it, which was securely based on observations of the most meticulous kind :

In one instance I had an exceptional opportunity of watching the behaviour of a male with regard to this question of territory. This particular bird owned a territory amongst some willows and alders adjoining a reed bed, the headquarters of his domain being a *Salix* bush overgrown with honeysuckle, and not more than fifteen yards away on the edge of the main portion of the reed bed was the territory of another pair. This latter pair must have arrived some few days before the former bird, because, when I commenced to watch the two territories on May 22, they were already building their nest. Morning after morning this single male behaved in much the same way, singing continuously while perched upon the sunny side of the bush which he had made his headquarters. If a single bird or one of another pair attempted to intrude upon his small domain, he fiercely attacked it, rapidly pursuing the trespasser some distance into the dense mass of reeds, and when a collision did occur the impact was considerable. If it was a pair that was intruding the attack was generally aimed at the male, but the female from the adjoining territory, while collecting food for her young, was also attacked. Thus the days passed by, sometimes peaceably, sometimes the reverse, until this jealous defence of his territory seemed to me to be a waste of energy and time, as it appeared to be improbable that a female would arrive at so late a date. In this, however, I was mistaken, for on June 20 a female appeared on the scene, and nesting operations were forthwith commenced. His behaviour now differed from what it had been previously ; the headquarters were of secondary importance, and he now followed the female submissively. It is an interesting fact, and not a little curious, that on the day on which the female arrived—June 20—the young of the adjoining pair finally left the nest. Why should this male for twenty-eight days have remained in the same small lot of ground ? Why should he day after day have been found on the same bush and upon almost the identical branch pouring out his song ? And above all, why should he have resented the approach of other members of his own species, and have attacked them so viciously ?

It was from such observation of the routine followed by a particular bird, and from the gift of asking pertinent questions, that Howard developed his views. He seems from the outset to have followed a well thought out plan for his observations : there is nothing in the least haphazard or inconsequent about them, and he explains why he chose to study the British warblers rather than any other familiar and accessible group. He says :

It would be difficult to find a family more suitable for such an investigation into behaviour, for, on the one hand, the nervous system of its different members is so framed as to produce a visible, emotional behaviour seldom surpassed in bird life,

and, on the other, the secondary sexual characters are not highly developed. The combination of these two characteristics is important; for since the emotional behaviour reaches its highest degree of intensity, and the secondary sexual characters their greatest development during the period of reproduction, a direct relation between the two has always been deemed more than probable.

Howard goes on to criticize the current use of the vague term "courtship". His work has an astonishing unity, so that it seems as if, when he first studied birds, he already knew what questions he wished to ask, and then directed all his studies towards their answering with a single-minded economy of purpose which is, surely, no less evidence of genius than the infinitely painstaking accumulation of facts. These qualities are still more evident in his next, and probably best-known, book *Territory in Bird Life*. Here he develops at length the views which had been suggested to him during his study of the warblers, and with examples drawn from many families and orders of birds he criticizes and illustrates his theory. The book was at once wholly convincing and (like all good books) led the reader towards further speculation and investigation of his own.

He begins with a note of scholarly caution, quoting Stout's dictum that human language is especially constructed to describe the mental states of human beings, and this means that it is especially constructed so as to mislead us when we attempt to describe the workings of minds that differ in a great degree from the human.

This was a lesson which Howard himself had thoroughly learnt, and much of the difficulty of his style is due to his watchful care lest any statement or suggestion of his might be misinterpreted by an inattentive reader. *Territory in Bird Life* however is comparatively easy reading, and is also probably of the most general interest of all his books.

He shows how territory may imply only a few feet of a ledge on a cliff, as well as the acre or two of a passerine bird, or the larger range of a predator. He describes how it comes into being, with the first rival of the male bird in spring, whether after a long flight from Africa or merely after detaching himself gradually from a local flock. So in the early part of 1915 he watched some lapwings in a meadow near his home. At first they would collect in a small flock at one end of the meadow, but gradually a male here and there would establish himself upon an unoccupied part of the meadow, until almost all the ground was divided between them. But this isolation of the male, which is the first evidence of the coming of the breeding season, was neither sudden nor clear at first: the males would go to their territories for a time but then would join the flock.

Howard considers the significance of song, and shows how its possession by the male alone (in most species) is to be linked with the fact that the male arrives first in the breeding area. For the female needs some more certain guidance to her mate than could be achieved by sight alone: and to enable recognition to take place the male must make himself as conspicuous as possible both by song and by position—whether he sings from

the top of a tree, or flies high above his territory like a skylark. Song further acts as a deterrent to other males of the species, and by warning them that a certain territory is already occupied it removes the need for the expensive and unwise process of fighting. For there is only one end which is served by all these different forms of behaviour, and that (in Byron's phrase) is "the continuation of the species." Fighting, which reduces the numbers of individuals in the species, is to be avoided, and in birds this is achieved principally through the isolation of pairs during the breeding season in the territory where they will be more or less free from disturbance by others of their own kind. This is the basic significance of territory, though for some species it may also have other values. Thus "one species must occupy sufficient ground to enable it to secure food for its young; another requires sufficient, but no more, upon which to deposit its egg; and a third must secure a position for its nest within the community."

The fact that birds, and other animals, tend to isolate themselves during the breeding season had been observed centuries before Howard wrote. He was not the first to note these facts, but the first to collate them into a system, and to found upon them a theory which has proved to be of immense value in biological studies. (In the same way Darwin had by no means been the first to note the facts on which the theory of evolution is founded, but had been the first to codify and interpret them.) This achievement of Howard's was indeed a remarkable one for a man without scientific training, with only the hours of leisure in which to carry out his work, and with no special advantages in the district where he lived. His house overlooked the River Severn, and in his garden there was a large pond. Close at hand were moorland and marsh.

Neither the pond nor the stretch of common from an ornithological point of view have anything very remarkable about them (a friend of his wrote after his death) and the casual observer might even be excused for wondering where were the birds to observe. And yet no two areas of terrain have, I make bold to say, ever been the scene of such persistent, continuous and fruitful observations. They were not casual, haphazard observations made now and again when the spirit moved and with no very definite object in view, but close, constant and very purposive daily observations begun before dawn and continued from the early days of February until the end of the reproductive season in June.

If the theory of territory and its significance is the part of Howard's work which is most easily summarized, and most adequately described in a phrase, it was, none the less, but a part of his work. His aim was, as has been said, to discover as far as possible how a bird's mind works, and how the world in which it lives appears to that mind; in short, what it feels like to be a bird. Territory was only one part of its mental environment, however important, and in his next book, modestly entitled *An Introduction to the Study of Bird Behaviour*, he treated of much else.

To the naturalist whose interest is largely in birds this book sets an example of methods and of insight which has no peer, and it can be—



deed must be—read again and again. His method is to study one or two common species, reed buntings or yellow hammers, with a view to discovering, from watching their behaviour, the nature of the mind that controls that behaviour. He takes the reader with him out into the marsh on the moor, and he writes as if he were quietly talking to him, by his side. It is a continuous story that he is telling and it is difficult to quote without damaging the quotation by its loss of context. But here, at the end of April, he has just seen a hen yellow hammer pick up a piece of dead grass :

So at length, at the end of two months or maybe one, the male and female behave as they have not before. Keep watch now on the female ; it is in *her* physiological condition that some change has taken place, not, I think, in *his*. Often, during the last few weeks, she rested in the oak, often settled on the ground beneath it ; but to-day she enters a thicket and stays there. A random movement, and one of small consequence. But what follows ? The male floats towards her on outspread wings. And what next ? She carries a piece of dead vegetation into the oak and negligently lets it fall. Here are three modes of behaviour appearing together, though not always in the same order. That they are somehow related seems clear. The first looks *as if* it were a preparation for the third ; we will refer to the second later. But be careful of the "*as if*". How often does the behaviour, which suggests so strongly that the bird is actually seeking a position for the nest, occur ? Not often perhaps, at any rate not so often as the "try here, try there" behaviour.

Now the last of the three modes of behaviour soon loses its vagueness, and a day later has the quality of persistence. The very female that yesterday picked up a piece of dead vegetation merely to drop it, apparently having no rhythmical interest in dead vegetation, now tears shreds of bark off the oak or vigorously pulls up pieces of dead grass and carries them into the bush, as if it were the one thing in life that brought her satisfaction. The thicket is a mixture of bramble and honeysuckle ; and to-day there are three ways by which she enters and leaves—a front entrance, a back entrance, and a side entrance. She goes in at the front entrance and out at the back entrance nineteen times ; in at the front entrance and out at the side entrance six times ; in and out at the back entrance one. She takes from fifteen seconds to one and three-quarter minutes to adjust each supply of material ; and when the rhythm ceases, the nest is formed. The male sits on the oak, or hops amongst the lower branches of the tree under which the nest is situated, but does not assist his mate. If she continues to build with such energy she will complete the nest in a few hours, but she ceases and leaves it formed but unfinished.

The next day she is at work again, making use of the usual entrance and exit and taking from twelve to eighty seconds to adjust the material, but rests the following day. A day later she concentrates upon finer material, making the use of the former entrance and exit except twice when she comes out of the thicket a new way. As before, she takes from ten to eighty seconds to weave the material into the nest.

Seven days after she picked up a piece of grass and negligently let it fall this female lays her first egg.

Note the precision of it all ; how he has remarked exactly how the hen enters and leaves the thicket each time she brings material for the nest, and how long she spends in weaving what she brings into the nest. And consider the patience of this man, watching and recording every detail, unaware (very often) until much later of its significance. But this needs no emphasis, for any naturalist will know as well as I do that this

patience is his most distinguishing mark ; and he who is not a naturalist will smile at so great attention given to the small ways of a bird.

Later in the same book Howard attempts to construct an account of the mind of the bird, and he warns us, with his invariable honesty, of the difficulty of the task, for " the way we see what a bird does and the way a bird sees what it does are clearly two different stories " ; and it is on discovering the latter that he had all along been intent. He describes some experiments which show how astonishingly stupid (by our irrelevant standards) birds may appear : for example, how, if the young are moved but a few inches from the nest, their mother will brood the empty nest within sight and sound of her chicks. But in *The Nature of a Bird's World* he rightly points out that all experiments are artificial and of little value, since they do not show how a bird behaves when free to act in accordance with its own mental faculties, but merely how it acts when confused by man's. And this is of less interest. So, at the end of his quest, in which he had added so much to our understanding of these strange lives he was content to admit that he had failed, as indeed he was bound to fail. " I seek the nature of a bird's world, not with any hope of finding it but to know what to find. There is more joy in finding a problem than in trying to solve one, for to solve a problem is a vain delusion."

And truly, in seeking to know what the problems were Eliot Howard had, all his life long, found much delight. I do not know any passage that gives more vividly the reward for which all naturalists are content to wait, through many hours, than this, where he tells of the return of the wood-larks in 1924 to a place where he had known them to breed for the first time in the previous year ;

So the following season, wishing to spend some time with a bird that was new to me, and loving the song, I set out to watch. It was early in February ; the north wind was terrible, the ground sprinkled with snow, Sky-Larks silent. But a day came when a feeling of spring was in the air. The wind was in the west, but not a westerly wind ; yet it was enough to bring a change, and Sky-Larks sang. By chance I look towards the west and see three birds approaching—buoyant flight, short tails, musical note ; I know they are Wood-Larks. They come over me, over the ground on which Wood-Larks bred the previous year. Then a strange thing happens, two become excited and one chases the other before they settle, the third hovering round them as they chase. The pursuit is not mutual, for one is always the aggressor and gives his rival no peace. So it continues ; not first here, then there, nor as they journey, but round and round over the same ground. They settle, and a few minutes later he that all along seemed unwilling to fight leaves—a solitary figure disappearing in the east ; the other stays to breed.

Surely it is clear from this, not only how much care went to this observation, how much knowledge was needed to enable him to be in the right place at the right time, but also how profound a satisfaction this great naturalist had won through his tireless application, and through the pain he took to understand, as no one before him had even tried to understand, the lives of these wild creatures about him. To his work the biologists will long continue to pay the tribute of learning ; but his books have an

interest for others than specialists—for all, indeed, who are willing to confess an interest in minds other than our own. These may or may not be proper studies ; but if a man is to enjoy the world aright he must be ready to pay attention to it, and to observe, among many other things, the too often unconsidered lives of wild animals and birds. There have been few who have studied birds with as much devotion or intelligence as Eliot Howard ; and if the style of his writing concedes little to the idle reader, so that he can never be so popular as Gilbert White or Hudson, yet his books ought not to be disregarded as mere scientific monographs. They are not, for his interest in birds went deeper than that. He cared for them not as a field for the discovery of new facts, or for the establishment of probably ephemeral theories, but for themselves.

A bird (he says) is the mystery, for it steals our values of beauty and mingles them strangely in form no less than in feathers ; in colour no less than in song ; and in what we value most, devotion to its home. And no less strangely it seems to mingle the blindness of an insect with the intelligence of an ape ; and because nothing is really blind and no one is likely to know what intelligence really is, mysteries will be mysteries still. I would not change it.

And again in his last and most abstruse book, *A Waterhen's Worlds* (where he ponders the problems of perception and reality, so that the book at times seems to be a treatise on metaphysics rather than a study of bird behaviour), he shows how the waterhen has memories, but no power to reflect, and therefore no perception of a self to which to refer them. "He has neither a future nor past—and so, no time. His world is always in the present, and mostly full of joy."



# THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

## WHAT IS ASPHODEL ?

BY ROBERT GRAVES

THE poetic education given in the modern English Literature class is meagre and wholly unpractical : it does not include a course in primitive religion, without a grounding in which such poems as " La Belle Dame sans Merci ", " The Ancient Mariner " and " Tom o'Bedlam's Song " yield only a small part of their sense ; or even in elementary nature study. One could, for example, get full marks by answering the class-room question : " What is asphodel ? " with : " A flower mentioned by Homer as growing in Elysium, on soft beds of which the souls of the just were believed, in his time, to rest their weary limbs."

But this answer would be inaccurate as well as insufficient. Tennyson who wrote in his " Lotus-Eaters " :

... Some, 'tis whispered, down in Hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel

was not always poet enough to check his facts and here he has blundered badly. Even ghosts would find asphodel beds extremely uncomfortable for lying about on.

The asphodel is a tall, tough-stemmed, handsome whiteish flower, known in England as " king's spear ", with bunchy leaves not unlike a daffodil's ( ' daffodil ', by the way, derives its name from ' asphodel ' and it was king's spear, otherwise known as ' affodel ', not the narcissus-like daffodil, which Milton ordered to fill its cup with tears at Lycidas's funeral. The daffodil could not have obliged, unless it had first uprooted itself and stood on its head). It grows wild on the poorest soil in most parts of the Mediterranean, and the asphodel meadow through which, in the *Odyssey*, the blessed dead walked should be pictured as rocky and waterless waste ground with clumps of caper, spurge and lentiscus. Nor was Elysium even in Homer's time a place where the souls of the just were sent ; it was where the souls of kings were privileged to go, irrespective of moral qualities. Their vassals and subjects, however virtuous, were not so blessed and had to descend to darker and less pleasant places underground. Elysium—the word is apparently pre-Greek—seems to have been originally a river-mouth islet to which the king's corpse was brought for burial, like King Arthur's to Avalon, and where he became an oracular hero. When this custom was discontinued in Mycenaean times " the islands of the blessed " became a mere figure of speech and in the *Odyssey* they are vaguely located in the far west " beyond the streams of Ocean, the White Rock, the Gates of the Sun and the Land of Dreams." The White Rock was perhaps the Dover cliff-line.

*Asphodelos* as a flower name occurs nowhere in Homer ; but four times as an adjective qualifying *leimon*, a meadow. It probably therefore stands for : *a*, not ; *spod*, ashes (*spod* could become *sphod* in Attic Greek) ; *elos*, valley. If so, the *asphodelos leimon* is really " the meadow in the valley of what escapes unburned ", namely of the king's soul which survives the funeral pyre. The connection between these sepulchral islands and the asphodel, or king's spear, which is first mentioned by the early poet Hesiod, seems to be that it was a food plant. Although in Classical times asphodel and mallow were, proverbially, eaten only by the very poor, they must once, before corn was grown in Greece on a large scale, have been the staple diet even of kings. The asphodel has potato-like tubers, often as many as eighty to a single plant, which when baked in wood ash and eaten with salt and oil are said to be nourishing ; Hesiod mentions an appetizing

ish of baked asphodel beaten up with figs, but I do not know that anyone has sampled in modern times. The seeds were also parched and eaten like corn, and even made into bread. Mallows are still popular in the South of France but asphodel has everywhere been ousted from the poor man's table by the potato; even the recent famine in the Greek islands failed to re-popularize it. And the leaves are no fodder for sheep or goats.

Since the asphodel can have been the only food plant which the souls of heroes would find growing in profusion on their sepulchral islands and since the tubers, like the souls, rose blessedly from the ashes of their wood-fire, the plant is likely to have taken its Greek name from the place, "the valley of what escapes unburned", rather than the place from the plant.

The later Greeks in defiance of the laws of etymology explained the word as formed from *aspis*, a viper, and *deilos*, terrible; which amounted to calling it "snake's bane". It was said that snakes could be kept at a distance by scattering its seeds on the ground; and the physician Nicander recommended the juice of the stems as a cure for snake-bite. These were guesses only and could easily have been disproved by experiment; but guesses based on primitive homoeopathic logic. Since the young stems closely resemble snakes; and since their royal flowers appear at the Spring Equinox when the Sun-god celebrates his victory over the Great Snake of winter; and since asphodels grow in Elysium where the blessed heroes walk; and since heroes are embodied in oracular snakes—therefore asphodel must be good against snakes. And since snakes were poetically connected with generation long before Freud exploited the symbolism, asphodel must also be a powerful aphrodisiac—as Pliny says it is. (This can also be easily disproved by experiment.) Pliny records that the stalks were hung up outside Italian farm-houses to keep off noxious spells: the theory probably being that common hosts and demons, conjured up by witches to harm the inmates, would mistake the place for the asphodel meadows in the Islands of the Blessed, where they had no right to go.

Brockhaus's *Konversations-Lexikon* (1925 edn.) says that sugar and alcohol are now extracted from asphodel tubers, especially in the Languedoc. But the yield does not seem to be very high; an asphodel factory started three or four years ago in Majorca (where I live) during a sugar famine, failed dismally, though the raw material is plentiful here and may be had for the carting.

I think that this is quite enough about asphodel.

**THE FIRST EUROPE**, by C. Delisle Burns. *George Allen & Unwin*. 25s.

There has arisen of late years an interest in that obscure period extending from the incursions of the uncivilized into the western Roman Empire to the dismemberment of Charlemagne's restored one, an era extending approximately from A.D. 400 to the first millennium, which it is not altogether easy to explain. Certainly no new documents of note have been discovered to throw light upon what, for want of written information, has rightly been called the "dark age". For the earlier period we are comparatively well supplied, from Cassiodorus, the chronicler

of the Visigothic Kingdom, to the Papal registers and letters of Gregory the Great and his life by Paulus the Deacon. Later, as civilization and letters decay, authorities grow less and less available. For the period before Charles, we are almost entirely dependent upon monastic chronicles written rather for edification than for factual history and the capitularies of the Frank Kings. Lives of Charles and his sons for a long time have also been utilized.

This paucity of material, however, has not prevented several modern English writers from exploring this comparatively uncharted time, of whom we may here mention in particular such

historians as Oman, Dawson and the writer of the present treatise, Delisle Burns, whose fine "study of the Establishment of Medieval Christendom A.D. 400-800" has now been posthumously published. Of the three, Christopher Dawson alone sees in this period the laying of the foundation of that medieval Catholic Christendom which he, with Hilaire Belloc, evidently regards as the norm of "the culture of the Christian North." In other writings, such as *Religion and the Modern State*, he has made this clear. The late Professor Oman, on the other hand, in his *Dark Ages*, contents himself with a mere chronicle of event; which makes his book the least interesting of the three, for, whether Fisher was right or not when he said that he could find no underlying purpose in history, the opinions of historians upon the purport of the events they describe cannot but add to the interest of their labours.

In this matter Mr. Burns is lucid and, even to those who do not accept his conclusions, interesting. To him the basic need in every age is moral prestige, and this, he thinks, was found in the epoch he considers in the universal acceptance of the sanctity of the Roman Empire, which was, in effect, identical with civilization. He agrees with most modern historians that in this matter Rome never really "fell". The Goths and Franks who militarily at different times occupied the Empire, like Theodoric the Ostrogoth, sought to model their government on Roman lines. They were even often prepared to become no more than *de facto* governors (patricians) under the Emperor as were the ancestors of Charlemagne for a time ready to serve the Merovingian kings.

In the view of Mr. Burns, Charles was endowed with the imperial mantle by the Church in order that the victorious protector of Catholicism should thereby attain a greater prestige; an elevation which later was to cost the Church dear. Unkindly, perhaps, he styles the great Charles of the legends a "play emperor".

The play itself, as he calls it, begins only after Charles has passed and his empire, prematurely born, dispersed. It is a world where, to quote the author, "imagination was stronger than the perception of facts"; it "is a childhood"; not, as Dawson would say, a stage on the way to the achievement of thirteenth century spiritual maturity. The error of the Catholic Church, "unavoidable perhaps," says Mr. Burns, was to "ignore Indian and Chinese civilization," and confuse "a medieval pope with the Galilean fisherman." To think of another world, as learned Christians often did, in which there were angels and devils was mere fantasy. The idea that God created the world for His own glory unfavourably influenced the behaviour and ambitions of kings and prelates bound on the same quest; the author does not point out that modern dictators, often atheists, are not immune from the same lure.

In a word, Mr. Burns condemns those who, he says, to-day would "embalm a tradition"—he even accuses the medieval church of attempting to do so. In his final words he declares "we should not hesitate to leave behind us the path cut through the wilderness of the First Europe. We have reached higher and clearer ground." I wonder.

HENRY SLESSER.

**THE AWAKENING : THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE WAY OUT**, by L. S. Amery. Macdonald. 8s. 6d.

**I FIGHT TO LIVE**, by Robert Boothby M.P. Victor Gollancz. 21s.

Mr. Amery's thesis is that the Bretton Woods scheme, the American commercial proposals, the Geneva and Havana conferences on the charter of the International Trade Organization and the convertibility conditions attached to the loan were all stages in a deliberate American policy to break up the sterling area and the British Empire and to bring world economy under American domination by enforcing acceptance of her obsolete theories of economic promiscuity on the dollar standard. He shows



by acute analysis and cogent argument how fatal this policy is bound to be for the war-shattered economies of Europe, and in the long run for America also, but suggests that it is less a realization of this than a growing fear of Russian Communist expansion which motivates the logically irreconcilable policy launched by the Marshall Plan. A planned trade using all the instruments of protection can alone, as in Elizabethan times, save us from collapse, and "only by being tough ourselves are we likely to get any consideration from the tough guys in Congress and in the business world with whom the final decisions lie."

It would appear that the British Government are well aware that planned expansion with full employment at home requires our integration in regions of planned trade. The beginnings of a Bevin Plan, since Mr. Amery wrote his book, must have given him grounds for hoping that the various schemes for making the world safe for American privateering are in practice being relegated to pigeon-holes marked "for future reference". This is however a well-produced and timely book which, with its appendices giving the texts of the international documents from the Atlantic Charter to the Paris Report, is a valuable contribution to the informed discussion which is now desirable.

On the economic issue Mr. Boothby and Mr. Amery are united. Mr. Boothby's book starts as a kaleidoscopic autobiographical commentary on foreign affairs between the two wars and ends with the author's views on our post-war political and economic problems. The first part is a reminder of the glaring errors (in which the author had no part) of those twenty years when "we were as badly governed as at any time in our history." In the second part Mr. Amery's attack on American economic policy (and our subservience to it) is reinforced. Hard things are also said about present Russian policy. To submerge our strategy and foreign policy in an American bloc, or "Atlantic

community . . . underwritten by the military power of the U.S.A." as the author somewhat illogically advocates may be all right for anyone who intends taking a ticket for California when the balloon goes up. It is not so attractive for the majority who must stay right here. To become the balancing bloc, which Mr. Boothby realizes is necessary, the third force of western union must have some weight of its own and an independent mission other than that of being an American (or Russian) outpost.

Mr. Boothby's declaration of political faith is that of a moderate and sceptical humanist devoted to empiricism. He defines the State's function in the promotion of an expanding economy as the provision for private enterprise of "the incitement and patronage of Government." This indicates the limited outlook of even a young and adventurous Tory. Where he shows his hand there are indeed some attractions, but a generalized well-meaning philosophical platform is not a policy. Faced with the complex political problems of to-day the voter demands sight of the whole hand before staking his future on it.

This is particularly true when the issue is the adoption of a policy of protection. Even the moderate Ottawa measures caused at the time unpleasant repercussions in other countries. A planned external economy is no more aggressive than American free-trade anarchy. But economic nationalism or regionalism is aggressive, and requires the sobering influence of international consultation. There was the sting of truth in the propaganda of the "have-nots" and the "proletarian" countries after 1932. Mr. Harold Wilson's disapproval (in the House on January 29) of "slapping on a tariff" without prior discussion with those it might affect was a recognition of this fact and of the need to moderate the national use of economic weapons.

These books have nevertheless persuaded one reader that our immediate hopes of survival rest on protection and bilateral trade or barter, whether or not

we emerge (by 1952 or ever) from our present crisis fit to stand up to the full blast of American multilateralism and non-discrimination.

EWAN WALLIS-JONES.

**STALIN**, by Trotsky. *Hollis and Carter.*  
25s.

According to the publishers of this book it is an "outstanding biography of the year" and by "the one man who knew the truth and was not afraid to tell it." These far reaching claims are not substantiated by the book itself. Those familiar with Trotsky's earlier writings will be disappointed by it. Even his greatest enemies admitted that Trotsky was a brilliant writer. But this book is boring in its tediousness from beginning to end. It is not a biography at all but the amplification of a thesis that Marshal Stalin was born a guttersnipe, grew up as an ignoramus, is physically deformed and mentally a crook, a gangster who has conquered power with a political machine of somebody-else's making, and maintained his power by killing off his rivals by poison and the firing squad. To substantiate his argument Trotsky has ransacked the writings of friend and foe and made liberal selections of data.

The real value of this book lies in what it reveals of Trotsky rather than of Marshal Stalin. It amply demonstrates that from the moment the latter crossed Trotsky's path and beat him in the race for the leadership of the Bolshevik Party Trotsky was increasingly consumed by a personal hatred of his rival. This distorted his mind until he became incapable of estimating political events from any other position than their bearing on Trotsky-Stalin relations. Because of this Trotsky was the last man who should have attempted to write a biography of Marshal Stalin.

One thing is glaringly absent from the book. It offers no explanation of how it came to pass that this "uncouth ignoramus", who, according to Trotsky, had no oratorical abilities and was almost an illiterate, was able to eclipse Trotsky "the master revolutionary,"

the man of all the talents, who conceived himself the historical "heir to Lenin's mantle." It is surely a sad reflection on Trotsky's organizing ability, political acumen, oratorical and literary powers, that this should have been. Yet it happened. And it happened in ways that should have given every satisfaction to the lover of polemics and the settlement of issues by popular appeal to the party of his choice. It should not be forgotten that the eclipse of Trotsky by Marshal Stalin took a period of years. It began in 1918 in the dispute concerning the Brest Litovsk Treaty and ended with Trotsky's expulsion from the ranks of Communism in 1927.

The claim that Trotsky is the "one man to see the truth" is, to say the least, an exaggerated claim. It implies a capacity to see the subject free from personal feelings. That Trotsky could not do. It also demands an intimacy with the subject which in this case he did not possess. The fact is, that in all the years of his rival's youth and young manhood right up to the 1917 Revolution, Trotsky spent very few of them in Russia. He had been an emigré for some years when he returned at the height of the 1905 Revolution and for a few days was chairman of the St. Petersburg Workers' Soviet. After its suppression he was arrested, exiled and again became an emigré until June 1917. The young Stalin also was arrested many times and exiled to Siberia. He returned on each occasion to Russia. During the whole of this period Trotsky fought the Bolsheviks led by Lenin; Marshal Stalin was a Bolshevik. Trotsky was a Menshevik until he formed a group of his own. It is one of the ironies of the story of Trotsky-Stalin relations that it was the Marshal who moved the resolution admitting Trotsky and his group into the Bolshevik Party at the Congress of July 1917, just four months before the Bolsheviks came to power. Up to this time Trotsky knew nothing of Marshal Stalin and was too pre-occupied with his fight against Lenin even to inquire about him.

No, Trotsky's Al Capone interpretation of the Russian Revolution will not do. The Russian Revolution was something greater than the cracking of cribs by crooks and the murder of the innocents by gangsters gone mad. It inaugurated a vast change in the structure of society and in human relationship. We may not like the mode of its coming, the men who have led it, and disapprove of it entirely. But one thing is certain—we shall never understand it, or its leaders, if we look at it and them, through the spectacles of hate and the distorted mind of an egocentric.

J. T. MURPHY.

**ITALY**, by Elizabeth Wiskemann. *The World To-day Series.* Oxford University Press. 5s.

**THE NEW ITALY**, by Muriel Grindrod. *Royal Institute of International Affairs.* 5s.

To all who prize Western values the culture of Italy is, I suppose, second only in importance to that of France. Yet how utterly ignorant we are of the pattern and texture of Italian politics when in the perspective of the country's history. Miss Wiskemann has essayed this gigantic task, and, if she has worked no miracle, she has done a thoroughly workmanlike job of interpretation.

In a first chapter of potted history she justly affirms that the culture itself of the country, which is indisputable, is Italy's primary claim to fame. From the point of view of twentieth century politics Italy remains (and not only to us British) something of an enigma; for, after all, it is only since the end of the eighteenth century that Italians have been striving to think and live in national, instead of in universal or communal terms."

Of the experimenting before Fascism Miss Wiskemann has not much to say. But she makes the essential point of the unsatisfactoriness of grafting foreign institutions: it led inevitably to the politics of manipulation reduced to a fine art which is associated with the name of Giolitti. In time this consecration of

opportunism, for all its appeal to the national trait of ingenuity, provoked a reaction; and in the event the clamour of certain groups of Radicals and nationalists for intervention in the 1914-1918 war can be seen now to have been exploited by others as, above all, a weapon with which to liberate Italy from the system of Giolitti. The consequence was, however, that after the war, there was, so to speak, a vacuum, which was filled at first by the Left parties pledged to "the realization of all the political and social hopes which had hitherto gone astray," and when they failed, and the swing-back to grim disillusionment came, by the power-politics of Mussolini. Miss Wiskemann is right to insist that at first Mussolini was concerned only to have control of the State machine—not till four or five years later did he

---

AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS:

## 'A NEW TESTAMENT WHO'S WHO'

By Dr. JAMES CRAWFORD M.A.

Every student of scripture should possess one. A handy compact reference to every character in the New Testament. Gives first reference and traditional notes. The only book of its kind.

PRICE 5/- or by post 5/6.

---

READY SHORTLY—by Same Author:

## 'THE GOSPEL OF THE UNKNOWN'

A most remarkable book: Unlike any yet published. Dr. Crawford at his best. The nameless characters speak, producing an outspoken, but deeply devotional message. A treasure-trove for all who preach.

PRICE 5/- or by post 5/6.

Over subscription likely for first edition—order now.

---

JUST PUBLISHED:

## 'A SERIES OF SIX BROADCAST TALKS'

By the Rev. BRYAN S. W. GREEN, B.D.,  
Vicar of Holy Trinity, Brompton.

These forceful talks were delivered over the radio during November 1947. They created much interest due to the unusual subject matter, and are published to stimulate thought on vital spiritual issues.

PRICE 6d. or by post 7d.

---

THE CREED PUBLISHING CO., LTD.  
5, CREED LANE, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.4.

---



discover the purposes for which this power should be used. She pays a proper tribute, too, to the 'forgotten men' of anti-Fascism of that early phase, for example, the Liberal Giovanni Amendola and the Piedmontese youth, Pietro Gobetti, one of the progenitors of the Party of Action of the 1939-1945 war period, besides the Communist stalwarts, Gramsci and Togliatti.

Fortunately, Italians not being Germans, the mind of Italy, as Miss Wiske-mann observes, "had been fettered but not strangled." Fascism, through the addition to the State organization of the Corporative machine and the Party bureaucracy, had found jobs for the intellectual proletariat from the overcrowded universities, including lower middle class elements (of whom Italy always boasts a disproportionate number because of the many small country towns). "Authority, order and discipline," however, had failed to curb the resilience or pierce the scepticism of the national character. The innate civilizedness—that untranslatable word *gentilezza*—of Italians of all classes was on the whole proof against Fascist corruption.

The "second Risorgimento", this time arising out of the people, began, we are reminded, well before the disastrous winter of 1942-1943. The losses of the Resistance are given here as 20,000 killed and 40,000 wounded and missing, besides the 20,000 killed and 20,000 wounded of those of the regular army who fought directly on the Allied side—not to speak of the tally of 100,000 families who by the beginning of 1946 had been identified by the Allied Screening Commission as having given help to escaping British prisoners-of-war. In the circumstances, given the fact that it contributed little to the actual military effort of the Allies, it was alas ! inevitable that that "Resistance" should have failed to receive due recognition.

Small wonder is it that the post-war period of "Provisional" Government gives the impression, mainly, of groping and confusion, and, superficially, there is to-day an ominous resemblance to last

time. Certainly the problem of devising a governing class with the necessary training remains unresolved. But, when writing her epilogue in 1946, Miss Wiske-mann found no cause for despair ; at least the mass of the people, industrial workers and peasants and the best of the middle class, she says, "want about the same degree of reform" and it is not very different from the programme sponsored by the Party of Action in January 1943.

Miss Grindrod has supplied a most useful record of the years of transition from war to peace : it makes an admirable factual complement to the Wiske-mann interpretative study.

WILLIAM RYDAL.

**CARIBBEAN : SEA OF THE NEW WORLD**, by Germán Arciniegas. Cassell. 21s.

**MEXICO SOUTH : THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC**, by Miguel Covarrubias. Cassell. 45s.

"Your Majesty, I have just discovered the Garden of Eden." So Columbus, from the New World, to Queen Isabella. Small wonder that for three hundred years Spain strove to deny to the rest of the Old World any part in the revelation, or that England, Holland and France reacted as they did. The Pope had presumed to divide the discoveries between Spain and Portugal, but "I should very much like," remarked Francis I. of France, "to see the clause in Adam's will that excludes me from a share of the world"; and thereafter there were few disputes among the powers of Western Europe in which the combatants did not straight repair, as to the arena, to the West Indies. To the Spaniards this first avenue of approach remained, incredibly, the only one. Once in three centuries, once only, did they open Buenos Aires to commerce. Convoys for the River Plate sailed to Porto-bello, whence cargoes were carried overland to Darien, re-shipped down the Pacific coast to Callao, and transported across the Andes and across the continent to Buenos Aires. The round voyage from Seville took from two to three years. There is no more perfect

symbol of the lumbering incapacity of the Spanish Crown to keep pace with the enterprise of its citizens : the policy, it might be called, not of the ostrich but of Achilles' heel.

Partly in consequence, the Caribbean became the Mediterranean of the New World, and on its waters pirates, buccaneers, filibusters of every nation—Hawkins, a Drake, a Raleigh, a Morgan among them—disputed naval supremacy, laid the shifting foundations of empire, and played fast and loose with European power politics. It is a tale of infinite violence. "If we were to remove the plots from the history of America," writes Sr. Arciniegas, "there would be nothing left." The nineteenth century saw even more violence than the sixteenth. "History has so ordered our circumstances that life, for us, has a dramatic quality, the emotion of constantly skirting the edge of an abyss." The human record doubtfully knows a more exciting canvas, and it is right that, alongside the sober narrative of the historian for historians, the tale should be told also, in technicolour, for the non-specialist reader. Sr. Arciniegas, one of the outstanding writers and intellectuals of Colombia, where he has been Minister of Education, is the perfect teller. He is as soundly documented on the European background and its interplay of forces, which is half the story, as on the actual events he narrates ; he writes with a vivid but controlled imagination, and he has been most admirably served by his translator, Harriet de Onís, and by his publisher.

The Mexican artist Miguel Covarrubias has likewise written a colourful book on Central America, and has been even more lavishly served by his publisher. The ninety-two line drawings, eight coloured plates and ninety-three photographs are eloquent complement to a new kind of field study, foreshadowed in the author's earlier *Island of Bali*. Sr. Covarrubias' interests are both archaeological and sociological, and he offers at once a reconstruction of the pre-Columbine civilizations of Southern Mexico on the basis of the latest excava-

tions and an analysis of the fabric of contemporary society in a region that emerged for a moment to high hopes of becoming one of the great traffic-ways of mankind, only to relapse, when Panama was chosen instead as the site of the canal, into the bosom of the timeless. Hence the link between themes so infinitely removed. On the one hand a Maya civilization going back at least to A.D. 320 and showing some seven hundred years of artistic effervescence ; on the other an agriculture where the seed is still sown not with the aid of oxen and plough but by digging-stick. The Spaniards found society and civilization under the Aztecs apparently vowed to self-extermination, such was the inordinate lust for blood-sacrifice. The magic powers of the gods, believed constantly on the wane, had to be fed by what was most precious to man. To-day the blood-sacrifice is still not unknown, but the deity is politics. *Plus ça change . .*

WILLIAM C. ATKINSON.

## HEFFER'S OF CAMBRIDGE

FOR

### BOOKS

\*

ENGLISH AND FOREIGN  
NEW AND SECONDHAND

*Catalogues issued*

BUYERS OF FINE, RARE  
AND SCHOLARLY BOOKS

W. HEFFER &



SONS LIMITED

Petty Curry

Cambridge

THE BOOKSHOP KNOWN THE WORLD OVER



## BOOKS ON THE TABLE

To avoid that state of being "profoundly unprepared" as they "enter upon the evening of life" noted by Jung, all under thirty are hereby advised to read *OLD AGE* by A. L. Vischer (*Allen & Unwin*. 12s. 6d.), but of course they will do no such thing. So it must be left to the middle-aged to learn from this book how to keep the spirit fresh. Dr. Vischer has perfected his study in the twenty years of his directorate of the famed municipal homes at Basle where his work, closely allied with the hospital, is planned to eliminate the isolation too often experienced in advancing years; and Lord Amulree writes an enthusiastic Foreword on this pioneering. The able translation from the German by Bernard Miall brings the book for the first time into the hands of the general English reader who, after commending the homes to the attention of the Ministry of Health, should concentrate rather on its application to his own idiosyncrasies of mind or body. Dread will recede before the comfort, the inspiration of discovering how real the compensations and rewards may be. Moreover, according to the birth-rate soothsayers, though this earthy aspect is not the author's concern, the old men and women of Britain are soon to be Very Important People.

### "The Lion looked at Alice..."

Contemplating the activities of Charles Dodgson is another useful guide in the art of living, for, in the sordid sense, presumably he never grew up at all. LEWIS CARROLL is a careful, scholarly biography of that remarkable man by Florence Becker Lennon (*Cassell*. 16s.). It is replete with bibliography, appendices, a novel time-table of Dodgson's progress between mathematics, photography and *Alice in Wonderland*, and illustrations chosen with that discrimination which does most honour to the subject. The style of the narrative, with all kinds of asides in the trans-Atlantic manner, is at first difficult to assimilate, and various sayings (as for instance an

apparently mental process known as "rail-roading" in connection with Alice's father, the awe-inspiring Dr. Liddell) are incomprehensible. But once accept the American language and prolixity and both are soon forgotten in the entrancing task of unravelling the complex personality of that eccentric genius. The author refers to a "pixy letter" written by Dodgson; if it is what this reader *thinks* it means, his was a "pixy" life.

### When men were giants

Never far from Oxford, too, is *IN THE GOLDEN DAYS* (*Frederick Muller*. 15s.), where Francis W. Hirst, later to be an editor of *The Economist*, was President of the Union. These youthful reminiscences are full of his friends, notably Hilaire Belloc, F. E. Smith and C. B. Fry. The end of an epoch, the General Election of 1906 provides him with a climax, and he discusses Campbell-Bannerman and tariff reform in a way to make the Liberal heart beat faster. He devotes a long chapter mainly to John Morley and his *Life of Gladstone*, in the laborious research for which Mr. Hirst assisted, afterwards reading and revising the proofs. Were I given to poker work, an excellent subject, to be hung over the editorial desk at Soho Square, would be the jotting from Mr. Hirst's diary on page 181, not listed in the index:

Mr. Morley said he first began to succeed in 1867, when he took over *The Fortnightly*...

### Homage from a son

Another Liberal contemporary of those golden days, in one of the most satisfying biographies of modern times unconsciously illustrates how important it is for a child to choose his parents wisely. Lord Beveridge in *INDIA CALLED THEM* (*Allen & Unwin*. 18s.) as is to be expected, not only had an exceptional father and mother but, also to be expected, exceptionally writes about them. In both spheres the force of heredity plainly shows: the letters of Annette and Henry Beveridge are wise



commentaries on beliefs, people and things; theirs was a "marriage of true minds," and the intellectual quality of their son, and his prestige, need no underlining here. There is no disposition to quarrel with the book's 'blurb':

Henry was seventy years ahead of his time in his views of British rule in India."

As he was an Indian civil servant all his working life, Henry was in a position to know. He was above hypocrisy, too, as the letter written in the hey-day of 'Victorianism' surprisingly shows.

Surely it must be very deleterious to us all to go on saying one thing and believing another "seems to presage the moral collapse of later days. The annotations—glossaries, indexes, notes on persons—

that complete and embellish the volume would delight the Annette who had received the higher education, "sheaves of certificates" and who possessed "the acute and reflective mind."

### Crafts and taste

A month before Lord Beveridge was born William Morris was asking in a lecture: "How can we bear to give any man less money than he can decently live on, less leisure than his education and self-respect demand?" A collection of such lectures and essays appears under the title *ON ART AND SOCIALISM*, selected with an introduction by Holbrook Jackson (*John Lehmann*, 8s. 6d.). They make illuminating reading to-day when so much of what Morris hoped for has come so horridly to pass. As Mr. Jackson acutely puts it, he was "the most splendid failure of the nineteenth century. . . . Morris failed because he was right." — A shining pendant on the chain of William Morris's visions of "the beauty of life" is Herbert Read's *GRASS ROOTS OF ART* (*Lindsay Drummond*, 5s.) Where the one feared the machine, the other believes that it can be reconciled with art and, as Morris pinned his faith to "the Twentieth Century of Education", Mr. Read says: "it is salutary to remember that a people can possess taste without the aids of education. . . . The good scholar, in China, would almost certainly

be a good calligrapher and even a good painter." The pity of it is that "those who dismiss as lunatic those few quiet voices that speak of love and beauty" are just those who will never stop to hear Mr. Read's.

### Voices sweet and true

In the section on arts and crafts in Kathleen Freeman's anthology *THE GREEK WAY* (*Macdonald*, 15s.) she translates Plato's description of the little metal statue thus:

This satyr Diodorus caught and charmed, he did not make.

The silver is but sleeping; don't prick him, lest he wake!

and she has 293 more equally charming pieces in her collection. In her preface she makes a persuasive plea for the learning of Greek providing the teacher be good. Her book, with its always apposite photographs and drawings, would seem to be proof that Dr. Freeman herself fulfils the condition.

— With Pindar's voice she sings of varied hues and crimson roses, and in *THE DAY OF THE ROSE* (*The Fortune Press*, 7s. 6d.) Ruth Tomalin sounds her own authentic note. Her prose produces the shock of delight that comes as a conviction that here is poetry; the same kind of shock, in fact, given by her two recent *FORTNIGHTLY* poems. There is a crispness, a sparkle, in the rhythms of her country pictures whether they be of dormice, the "pink and silver harvest" of mushroom pickers, brown owls, or "the red buds of the pollarded limes". And her Rupert, and the nine-year-old boy in the juvenile court, so far from being types are instantly recognizable as true individuals. Let no-one pass over this book because of its unimpressive format, its profusion of capital letters, its "The Lady of Shalott" spelt as though she were a kind of onion. Here is a writer who should be encouraged.

### A miscellany with some crimes

*THE SATURDAY BOOK*, edited by Leonard Russell (*Hutchinson*, 21s.) has so many voices that to read what they

are all saying consecutively and "straight off" is not only bewildering but an abuse of the book's purpose. It stands the test of comparison with the first *Saturday Book*, which is a considerable achievement for a seventh volume. It is a great deal glossier and much more *Picture Post-y* than its wartime ancestor, though of the contributors of 1941 H. E. Bates, Nathaniel Gubbins and Iain Lang still stay the course. With such a lavish production it is perhaps ungracious to repudiate the publisher's claim that this "unrivalled spectacle" surpasses anything that the series has offered before. — Bernard Darwin's contribution aroused again the wonder, tinged perhaps with shame, that one who cares so little for detective fiction should derive such keen enjoyment from reading reports of trials. The clues to the mystery are given by Sir Roland Burrows, K.C., in his "Foreword on the Reading of Criminal Trials" to *FAMOUS AMERICAN TRIALS* by Bechhofer Roberts (*Jarrolds*, 10s. 6d.). Sir Roland not only takes the sense of sin out of the enjoyment but makes it seem a positively laudable activity—which leaves the reader to seek untrammelled pleasure in what follows. To say that the twelve cases surveyed in no way disappoint is understatement; they are enthralling. And John Brown's body and the trial of President Lincoln's assassins are no less so than are the cases with a fairly recent notoriety like the Leopold-Loeb and Sacco-Vanzetti affairs, and the Thaw, Hall-Mills and Snyder-Grey murders. Part of the hypnotism engendered is due to Mr. Roberts's presentation of the facts, sparsely interlarded with his dry comment.

### Realism and elusiveness

Fred Urquhart specializes in the dry comment with which he sprinkles his dialogue. He has a real gift for this medium, as may be witnessed in *THE LAST G.I. BRIDE WORE TARTAN* (*Serif*

*Books*, 53, George Street, Edinburgh. 6s.). This is a collection of short stories, the first of which being somewhat pretentiously described as a 'novella'. The usual word 'novelette', merely meaning a small novel, would seem good enough to define it. It is a tart tale, and the author's malice takes full advantage of the setting of a ship carrying war brides to America, and afterwards in a small town near St. Paul. There is a certain beauty in the transformation of a movie struck girl, intent on achieving Hollywood, into a loving wife. The other stories are slight but they do nothing to undermine the impression of the first—which is that the author is only now sharpening his tools and measuring off his work preparatory to getting down to the job. — *THE WANDERER* (*Paul Elek*, 10s. 6d.) is a translation of *Le Grand Meaulnes*, made by Françoise Delisle, of Alain-Fournier's 'minor classic' which nearly won the *prix Goncourt*. Its author was killed at the age of twenty-seven, a few months after it was published in 1914. Through the years it has grown in significance and its creator's reputation has increased. In a preface to this edition Bonamy Dobrée examines the reasons for this lasting influence. And to quote his words is to give an idea of the book's quality, the capturing of perfect but transitory enjoyment:

The realm . . . is that of the impulses and sensations, the intuitions and idealisms of that period in life which lies between adolescence and manhood, a fleeting period which Fournier felt to be so infinitely precious that he wished to fix it . . . it is bound to be modified, adapted sullied by living, but which while it lasts is to be fearlessly prized.

The biographical details, including an account of the influence of Péguy (killed early in the same war too) and Rivière, perhaps help to account for the flavour, "something refined and rarified, a delicate perfume", of his work.

GRACE BANYARD.